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JUNE 1960

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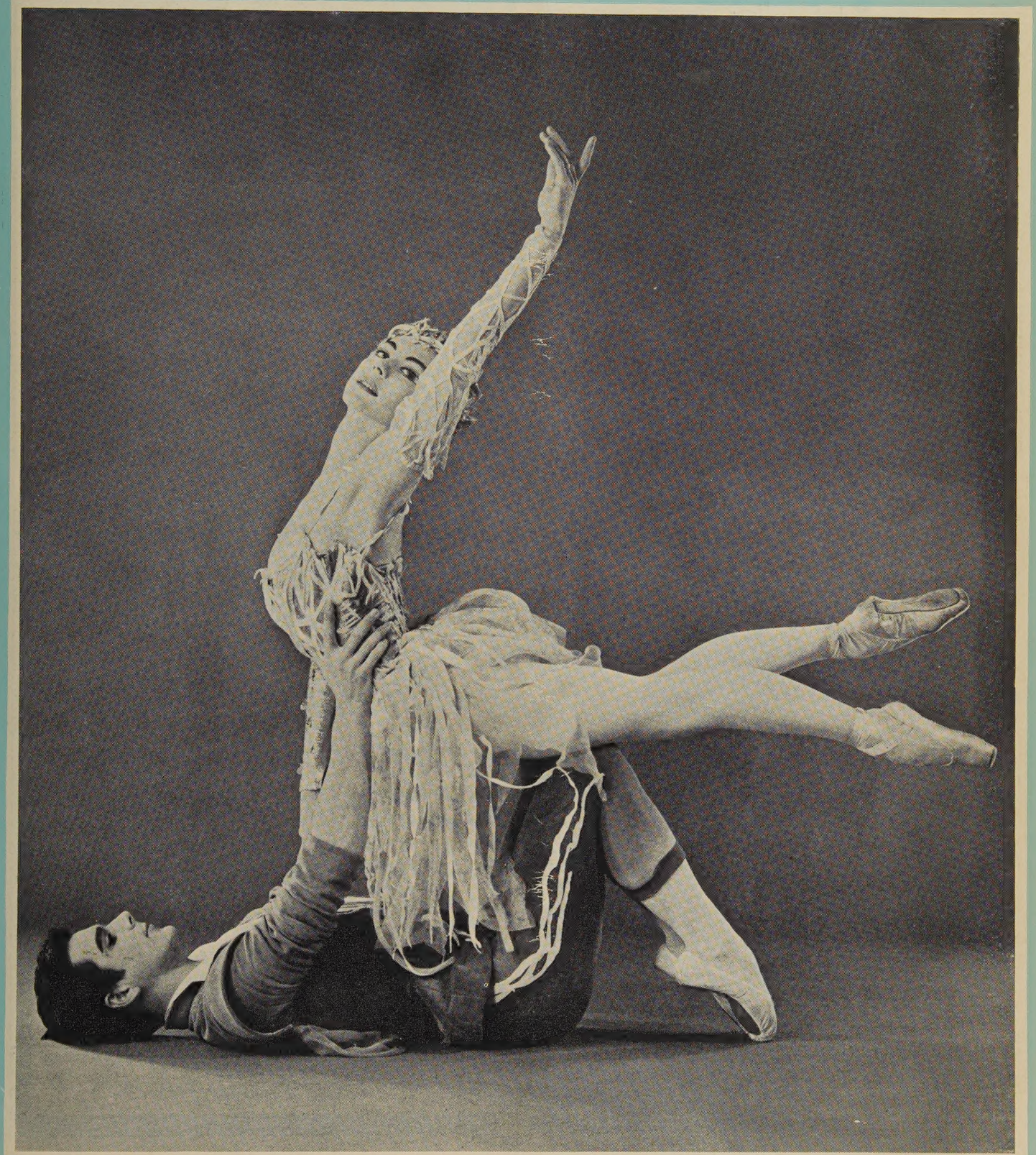

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Personality of the Month

AS A BLUEBIRD. *Photo : Houston Rogers.*

PETER CLEGG

IF all the dancers who have left the Royal Ballet — for this reason, that, or another — got together and formed into a company, they would be a formidable troupe. The latest recruit to this unfortunate "ghost" ballet is, if rumour can be believed, Peter Clegg.

As well as being probably the most under-rated dancer in British ballet, Clegg is also among the most important. The explanation for this curious position is simply that his greatest virtue is his versatility.

The range of his rôles is absolutely astonishing. Apart from princes — which are more or less ruled out by his lack of height — he can, and has, danced anything and everything. Since he started as a soloist (with the Blue Boy in *Les Patineurs* and Donald in *Donald of the Burthens)* everything has come his way — from the Blue Bird in *The Sleeping Beauty* to the "Helpmann" sister in *Cinderella,* from the Neapolitan Dance in *Swan Lake* to the Peasant *pas de deux* in *Giselle,* from the Blackamoor in *Petrushka* to the Barber in *Mam'zelle Angot,* or the "Britton" variation in *Danses Concertantes.*

He has been with the company for about 15 years, is now just over thirty, and reaching his prime as a dancer and as an artist. A splendid technician, a fine actor, he is the kind of dancer who gives a great State company its lustre. Perhaps he has been unlucky — although he has danced almost everything, he has created almost nothing, nor has he been given star-billing. It is to be hoped that the company will succeed in persuading him to change his mind.

JUNE 1960 11th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 11 No. 6

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Lingua Franca

"WHY call it *Le Baiser de la Fée* and not *The Fairy's Kiss*?" screamed the Press after the ballet was recently put on at Covent Garden. Why not indeed, unless it *is* that the English translation might suggest something not always appreciated by an Anglo-Saxon public. Of course we know about "French being the language of the dance" and all that, don't we? But let's stick to good old roast beef and talk about *The Sleeping Beauty* and have nothing to do with that ungainly *La Belle au Bois Dormant* which was anyway written by a Froggie called Perrault. Just to show we are not entirely insular we then can go on to talk about *Le Lac des Cygnes* instead of *Swan Lake.* Jolly international of us, isn't it?

Why not agree with our Aunt Ednas, sipping their tea from Worcester cups in Kensington drawing-rooms, and call everything by Union Jack names — *The Skaters* instead of *Les Patineurs, Meetings* instead of *Les Rendezvous, Ballet Scenes* instead of *Scènes de Ballet.* Of course I don't know just *what* you would call *La Fille Mal Gardée,* but there are two alternatives — *Vain Precautions* (Russian) or *Naughty Lisette* (American). Then you might have *Queer Bazaar* instead of *La Fête Etrange* and doubtless *Petrushka* could always be called *Baby Russian Doll. Les Sylphides,* however, does sound much better than *The Sylphs* with its suggestion of people having just taken reducing pills. Yet think how much more respectable *Night Spinsters* would be instead of that raffish-sounding *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* ! So there you have it, Auntie, but of course so as to remind you of your annual Mediterranean excursions to avoid — dare I say, rheumatism — we should keep it a teensy-weensy bit Continental, shouldn't we? So what about *La Vie Débauchée* instead of *The Rake's Progress* or *Echec et Mat* instead of *Checkmate*? Then there's *Ballabile,* a difficult one this because it's an Italian word and it should remain that way because the ballet's by a French choreographer.

Really there's no solution, and it seems that inconsistency must abide in these ballet titles. The fact remains that ballets are called what they are because whoever names them feels that they happen to sound right according to the mood and theme of the ballet in question, and frankly it does not matter two hoots even if they are written in Chinese. So let us stop all this nonsense about what ballets *ought* to be called and saying " it's pretentious " just because they are not always in a language that slips easily off your tongue. As for me, I shall always call *The Three-Cornered Hat, Le Tricorne,* so there !

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Le Baiser de la Fée

First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden on April 12, 1960. Ballet in four scenes with music by Igor Stravinsky. Choreography by Kenneth MacMillan. Designed by Kenneth Rowell. Lighting by William Bundy.

Cast

The Fairy ..... SVETLANA BERIOSOVA
The Child's Mother ..... MERIEL EVANS
A Young Man ..... DONALD MacLEARY
His Fiancée ..... LYNN SEYMOUR
The Gypsy ..... JACQUELINE DARYL
Four Winds ..... Richard Farley, Ronald Plaisted, Keith Rosson, Bryan Lawrence

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Corps de Ballet of Creatures Attendant on the Fairy, Villagers and Musicians at the Fête.

STORY

The Lullaby in the Storm

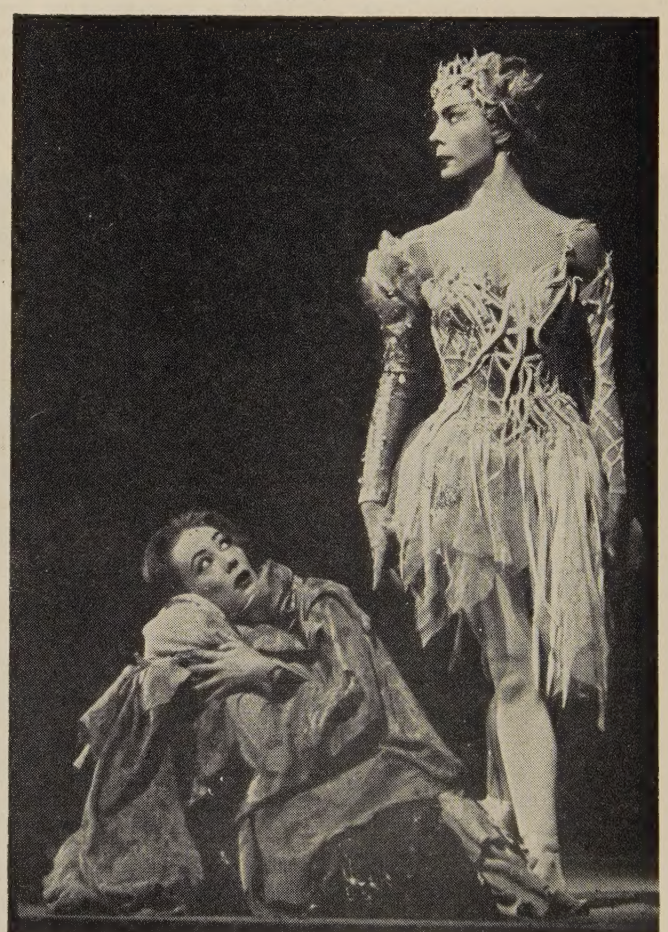
"A MOTHER with her child struggles through the storm. The Fairy with her attendants appears and pursues her. The Fairy separates the mother from her child. Passing villagers find the body of the mother, now dead, and guided by the Fairy, they find the child. The Fairy kisses him on the forehead. The villagers become frightened and taking the child with them they run away.

A Village Fête

"The villagers gather for the fête. The child, now a young man, appears with his fiancée. A gypsy endeavours to tell the fortune of the young man and during the fortune-telling the fiancée leaves with the villagers; left alone the young man discovers that the gypsy is the Fairy in disguise. She subjects him to her will, and promises him great happiness. Captivated, the young man is led to his fiancée.

At the Mill

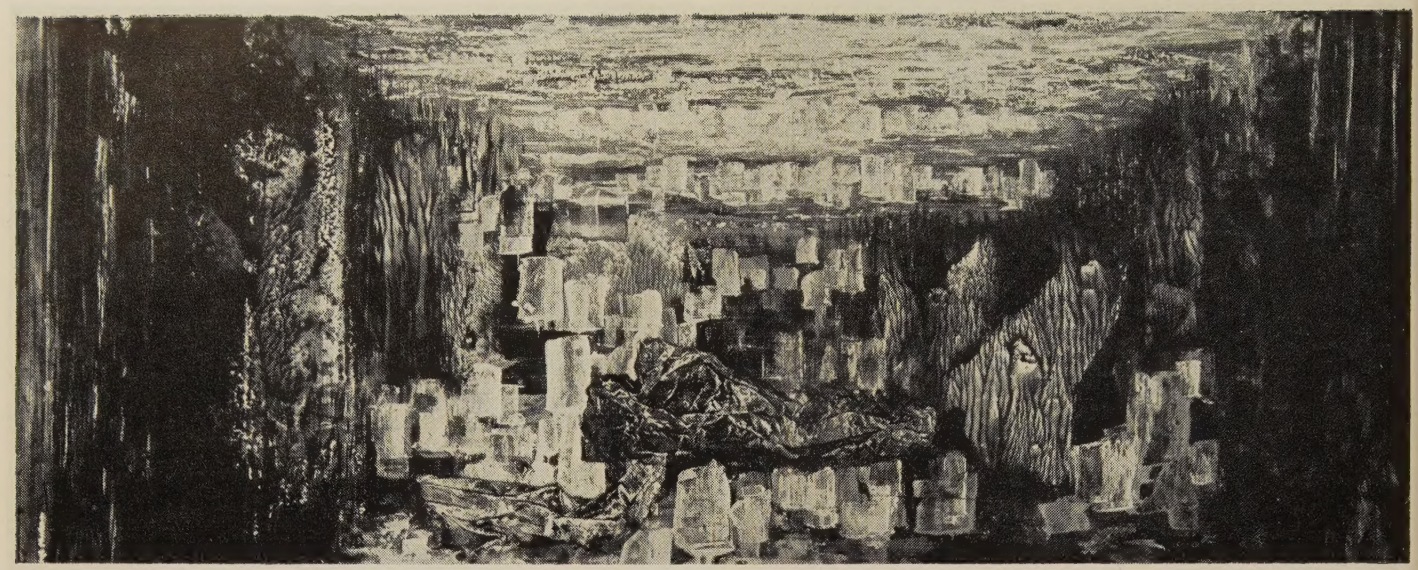
"Guided by the Fairy, the young man arrives at the mill, where he finds his fiancée playing games among her friends. The Fairy disappears. They all dance. The Fairy appears again, and the young man



FAIRYLAND INTRUSION: Above, Kenneth Rowell's design for the front cloth which drops between scenes 2 and 3 and which suggests the strange kingdom to which the Fairy will eventually lead the Young Man. It is in brown with white tendrils. Photo: Donald Southern.

Right, the dying Mother (Meriel Evans) is faced by the Fairy (Beriosova), who separates the child from her.

Photo: Dominic.



DESIGN FOR A VILLAGE: Kenneth Rowell's sketch for the village where the Fiancée and her Young Man live. It is mainly in brown and white with touches of bright scarlet. *Photo: Donald Southern.*

is confused. The fiancée leaves with her friends and the young man is once more left alone. The Fairy reappears and the young man mistakes her for his fiancée. Suddenly the Fairy throws off her cloak and, dumbfounded, the young man realises his mistake. He is defenceless before the supernatural power of the Fairy. His resistance overcome, she holds him in her power. She kisses him.

The Lullaby of the Land Beyond Time and Place

"The fiancée, lonely and sad, looks in vain for her lost love. The young man now completely submissive to the power of the Fairy is taken to the Land Beyond Time and Place; there to live eternally, marked by the kiss of the Fairy."

CHOREOGRAPHY

"I'M just back from the theatre, with a fearful headache, as a result of all the horrible things I've been seeing." This very contemporary-sounding criticism was in fact written by Diaghilev in a letter to Lifar on November 28, 1928. He had just seen the first performance of the Bronislava Nijinska/Igor Stravinsky ballet *Le Baiser de la Fée*. It was not, as they say, a success. It even left Stravinsky cold.

Since that time the ballet has been produced by a number of choreographers, notably Frederick Ashton in 1935 and George Balanchine in 1937. Kenneth MacMillan, the latest choreographer to be tempted by the score, has had his eye on the ballet for a number of years. When he was asked to prepare his first professional work for the Sadler's Wells organisation his original idea had been to make a new version of *Le Baiser de la Fée,* although subsequently production difficulties led to this being abandoned in favour of *Danses Concertantes*. Now, six years later, he has achieved his ambition, and with it a choreographic triumph.

THE FETE: The Fiancée (Lynn Seymour) with her Young Man (Donald MacLeary), surrounded by villagers, at a pre-nuptial fête. *Photo: Dominic.*

For all their obvious attractions the score and scenario of *Le Baiser de la Fée* contain many pitfalls. The music, although not here my concern, is hardly among Stravinsky's best scores, and the narrative, taken by the composer from Hans Andersen's fairy tale *The Ice Maiden,* is far from easy to convey in movement. Just to instance one example, the ballet opens with a mother and child battling against a storm, the curtain falls and immediately rises again on the infant having attained manhood. How can this be expressed in ballet? Short of an announcement from the stage, or a sub-title drop curtain ("Twenty years later"), neither solution being one to appeal to a sensitive choreographer, the problem seems insoluble. But the whole story is as full of holes as a sieve; why at one point should the Fairy lead the Young Man to his Fiancée? Why at another should that short-sighted swain confuse the two of them? The answers to such questions would matter less if the questions themselves were more interesting — after all we are now becoming accustomed to the answerless drama of such *avant garde* playwrights as Beckett and Pinter. But while *their* questions may be equally pointless they never appear meaningless.

Also MacMillan has actually added to the inherent difficulties of Stravinsky's scenario by quite needlessly having the Gypsy portrayed by a dancer other than the Fairy, an innovation which only makes confusion damned confounded.

Stravinsky could, of course, reply that his ballet was meant as an allegory, and with a disdainful gesture refer any petty-minded literalists in his audience to his dedication on the score, which Covent Garden have thoughtfully printed on their programme, and less thoughtfully omitted to translate from its French. Even so it is a strange sort of allegory that only exists on its *allegorical* level, and does not, as it were,

make complete sense on the ground. And even this "unilateral" allegory is not without a few very dubious significances.

Consider Stravinsky's note, or rather consider David Drew's translation of it in the *Decca Book of Ballet*: "To the memory of Tchaikovsky. In associating this Muse with our Fairy, this ballet becomes an allegory. This Muse has in the same way marked the ballet with the fatal kiss whose mysterious imprint is visible in all the work of that great artist." While his theme certainly serves well enough to symbolise the artist's destiny, his dedication and his place in society, the ballet hardly makes the full import of its allegory particularly clear. Allegory, unlike symbolism, is a literary form of some precision, and the enquiring mind might well wonder what exactly the Fiancée, the Mother, the Villagers, and even more importantly the four Winds and the "Creatures attendant on the Fairy" are meant to represent. Such considerations are far from trivial, and the faults of MacMillan's ballet are therefore inescapable, being inherent in Stravinsky's scenario. They do, moreover, prevent the work from having the sustained intellectual interest of genuine poetic drama.

Earlier I called MacMillan's ballet a choreographic triumph, and having already apparently modified my rapture, let me now explain and expand it. MacMillan's choreography has a reserved, icy beauty completely appropriate to its subject. Just as Stravinsky — and, one supposes, Benois, who had the basic idea for a "Tchaikovsky" ballet in the first place — conceived *Le Baiser de la Fée* as a *hommage* to Tchaikovsky, by making it a full-length Maryinsky classic, such as *Swan Lake,* refined down to its primal elements, so MacMillan has accepted this conception and devised his choreography on the same principle.

From his work in *Danses Concertantes* and *Agon,* it has been obvious that MacMillan has a marked sympathy for Stravinsky's music, and this sympathy has not deserted him in tackling *Le Baiser de la Fée.* Not only is the choreographer able to catch the exact form and rhythm of Stravinsky, in a way that no other choreographer seen here, except Balanchine and, in *Scènes de Ballet,* Ashton, he also shows a delicate awareness of every nuance of the music's atmosphere. To take only one example, the stylised folk-dance material Stravinsky uses in the second scene is admirably matched by grotesque dances that convey just the same tongue-in-cheek attitude to their folk sources.

For all this, probably MacMillan's greatest success derives from the manner in which he has transformed 19th-century classical choreography into something completely individual, and yet at the same time retained the essence of its style and structure. In his previous work MacMillan has always been concerned to place his personal imprint on the choreography. Here for the first time he uses the standard classical vocabulary without any affectation or fear, and although his own style is as strongly felt as ever it emerges unself-consciously. In a sense *Le Baiser de la Fée* represents the most mature choreography MacMillan has so far given us. While he is in no way seeking out originality, a very great deal of the work is highly original, with a profound freshness that makes no effort to startle.

DESIGNS FOR VILLAGERS: Kenneth Rowell's designs for some of the villagers in scenes 2 and 3. *Photo: Donald Southern.*

FAIRY INTERVENTION: The Fairy (Beriosova) appears to claim the Young Man (MacLeary), whom she kissed as a child. Two moments from one of their two pas de deux. *Photo left by Houston Rogers, right by Donald Southern.*

PRE-NUPTIAL ECSTASY: The Young Man (MacLeary) lifts his prospective bride (Lynn Seymour) in a pas de deux *before the wedding which never takes place. A moment from scene 3.* *Photo: Donald Southern.*

Not all of the choreography is so deserving of praise, and that for the prologue is frankly indifferent to dull. The Mother, who clearly is never going to darken any doorsteps again, trudging through the storm, with her spirits sinking nearly as fast as those of the audience, is hardly the happiest of MacMillan's conceptions. Nor are things much improved by four multi-directional winds, who come scudding in, looking as though they were on brief leave of absence from Massine's rehearsals in Nervi. But once this Prologue has gone its way, things take a turn for the splendid, and MacMillan gets down to the real stuff of his ballet. His three principal characters have all been neatly characterized, and their dances are given a dramatic appositeness in addition to their strong sense of structural form.

Where MacMillan has shown particular brilliance is in the way he has varied the ballet's choreographic texture to suit both character and situation. The Fairy herself is realised in terms of chastely pure classical dancing, with languorous extensions and *arabesques* that give a deliberate, flowing grace to all her movements. The rôle of the Young Man has been conceived in terms that can only be described as lyrical bravura, which hints at the ambivalence of his character. At times, with his fast spins and open jumps, he suggests little more than youthful virility, yet there is also a strange melancholy to his movements and a classical purity that sets him apart from the other village boys and links him to immortality.

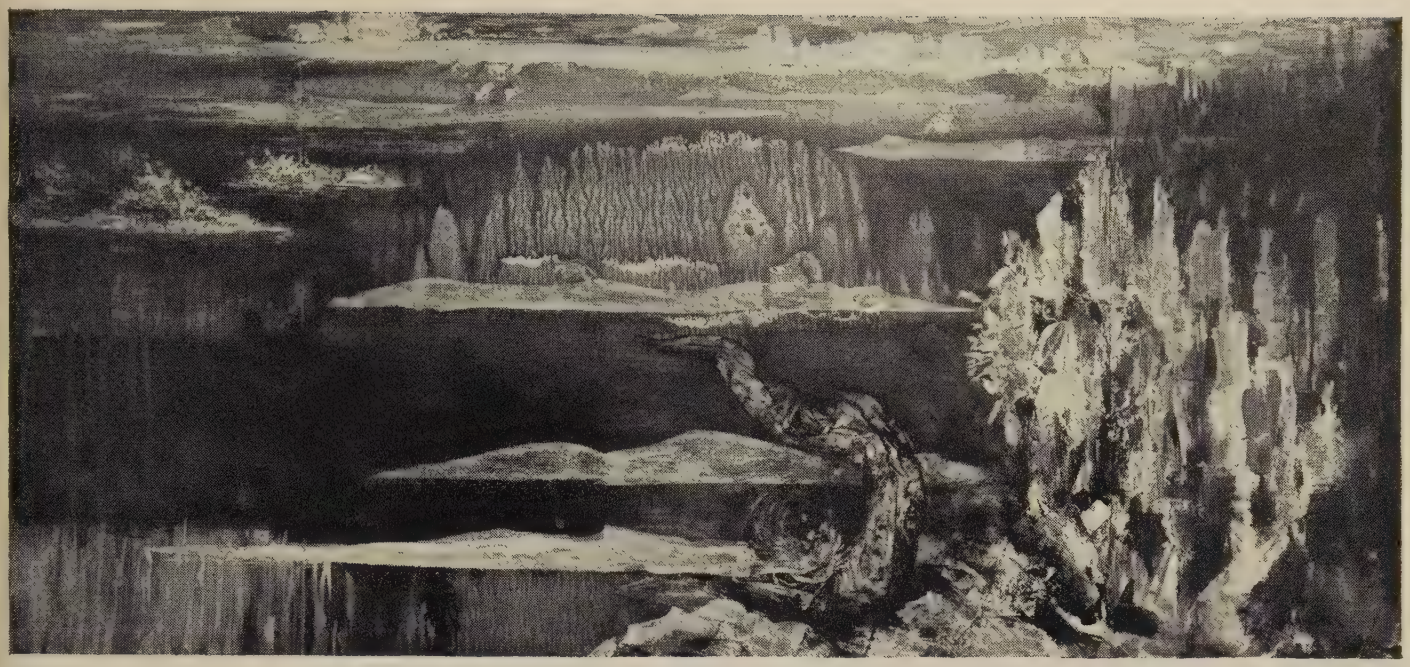
BETWEEN TWO FIRES: The Young Man while dancing with his Fiancée suddenly finds that he is also dancing with the Fairy. *Photo: Dominic.*

As equally interesting as these rôles, and rather more complicated, is the part of the Fiancée, and here MacMillan subtly shows the development of her character. She is first seen dancing blithely with her friends, as uncomplicated, choreographically speaking, as a Swanilda. At the Mill with the Young Man her dancing becomes more complex. Breathless, trilling little steps proclaim her excitement and ardour, while in the *pas de deux* the choreography expresses the first innocent joy of love. By the last scene the Swanilda has become an Odette, and a series of dance images succinctly evoke her misery.

While Stravinsky's scenario is inept since it muffs its dramatic narrative and fails even to be consistent or explicit as allegory, it does have one shining virtue in that it offers the opportunity to present a symbolic picture of the artist. This chance MacMillan has taken and exploited. In the last scene, "The Lullaby of the Land Beyond Time and Place," he combines with the composer and designer, to produce an apotheosis of serene power that is one of the most poetic and significant moments in modern ballet.

DANCING

THE ballet can be seen as a dramatic *pas de trois* danced against a background of shadowy figures. All the three principal rôles are taxing, and MacMillan has put a great deal of ingenuity into their creation. The Fairy is probably the best opportunity Svetlana Beriosova has ever been given in a modern ballet, and no work has ever shown off her personal style to such excellent advantage. The finish of her dancing was absolutely faultless, and her movements unfolded in a continuous flow. There was an eloquence



THE LAND BEYOND TIME AND PLACE: Above, Kenneth Rowell's design for the last scene. Photographed by Donald Southern. Below, The Fairy (Beriosova) is seen in a supported arabesque penchée *at the beginning of this scene. Photo: Dominic.*

and inevitability linking one step to the next, and her performance was exquisitely phrased and stressed to the music. I did, however, have some reservations about her acting, and feel that she could give rather more emotionally to the part. If I were a poet and she were my muse I cannot help thinking that I would be more impressed than enthralled.

Like Beriosova, Donald MacLeary also needs to add a little more dramatically to his interpretation, particularly in the last scene where he needs a grander sense of exultation. Yet elsewhere his characterisation was admirable, notably the way in which he first mistrusts the Fairy, only to succumb to her call. His dancing was altogether excellent. MacMillan has hit off to a nicety his exceptional qualities, exploiting his full technical resources, with his fine easy jumps and effortless *pirouettes,* and also that lyrical fire that gives his dancing its still immature individuality. His partnering, both of Beriosova and Seymour, was completely sure and accomplished. Nothing MacLeary has done before has shown so clearly the extent of his potentiality.

When Ashton mounted his version of *Le Baiser de la Fée,* the part of the Fiancée was given to the young Margot Fonteyn. Now a generation has passed and very possibly dance historians of the future will find it significant that MacMillan allotted the same rôle to Lynn Seymour. Or, perhaps they won't. But in any case Seymour danced gloriously and made a touching and appealing thing out of her first major creation. Never once overshadowed by Beriosova, she gave the part with a mixture of piquancy and pathos, tenderness and warmth.

Both Meriel Evans and Jacqueline Daryl had somewhat ungrateful parts as the Mother and the Gypsy. Meriel Evans captured the atmosphere of the ballet and moved well, but her make-up could have been a little less immaculate, she looked rather too glamorous for a wind-tossed tempest. Daryl, who has already shown a marked aptitude for dramatic rôles, danced and acted extremely well as the ambiguously sinister Gypsy. Hers is a talent to be encouraged.

The four Winds — Richard Farley, Ronald Plaisted, Keith Rosson and Bryan Lawrence — performed creditably what was asked of them, as did the rest of the *ensemble.*

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

THOSE unfamiliar with Stravinsky's score (even the orchestral *Divertimento* he adapted from it is a relative rarity in our concert programmes) might have anticipated another *Agon* or *Danses Concertantes.* They must have been somewhat disconcerted by the innocuous and vaguely reminiscent sounds emerging from the orchestra for MacMillan's new version of the ballet. For this, of course, is Stravinsky's homage to Tchaikovsky, composed in 1928 when the older Russian's music was distinctly out of favour among the musical modernists of the time in Paris.

Ida Rubinstein's original suggestion to the composer was for something "inspired by the music of Tchaikovsky". Stravinsky's response was to go further and yet not so far. He borrowed a capful of Tchaikovsky melodies, mostly from the lesser-known piano pieces and songs, re-cast and transformed them to a varying extent and

continued on page 21

BARREN SCEPTRE : *José Limón, with Pauline Koner, in his new work on the "Macbeth" theme which was first given at the Juilliard School of Music on April 8.* *Photos : Jack Mitchell.*

Sixty Nights of American Dance

The sixty Spring nights which brought to New York, four programmes of Modern Dance at Juilliard, three new musicals, a new masterpiece from Balanchine, the 20th Anniversary season of American Ballet Theatre and a season with two creations by Martha Graham and her company.

by ARTHUR TODD

FROM March 29 and running through May 7, the appearances of four major American dance companies plus the production of three new musicals on and off Broadway has made this the peak period in New York's 1959-60 season. Enough wonderful and dreadful things have transpired to fill this issue. And, at the conclusion of Martha Graham's season on May 9, the critical press, the audiences and the dancers themselves have been both exhilarated and exhausted.

As indicated in our previous issue, the New York City Ballet opened *its* four-week Spring season at the New York City Center on March 29. The Juilliard School of Music presented *their* "four evenings of dance" on April 8-9 and 11-12. American Ballet Theatre started *its* three-week Twentieth Anniversary Season at the Metropolitan Opera House on April 19, thus competing with the last week of the New York City Ballet's season. Martha Graham opened *her* season on April 25, the day after New York City Ballet closed, and played against American Ballet Theatre for the last two weeks of *their* run. Though it all sounds very confusing, the results were what one might have assumed in advance. The New York City Ballet had a marvellous season that was highlighted by a new masterwork by George Balanchine, *The Figure in the Carpet.* On the other hand, Martha Graham's season was equally triumphant and she added one smash hit to her repertoire — *Acrobats of God.* José Limón produced a major new work, *Barren Sceptre,* during the Juilliard season and, once more, dance became important news on Broadway in three new shows. Unfortunately, however, American Ballet Theatre had possibly the most disastrous season in its history and left many of us apprehensive, to put it mildly, about their projected European and Russian tour when they seem dangerously close to the verge of artistic collapse.

TOCCANTA : *Betty Jones, with Ruth Currier, Chester Wolenski and Harlan McCallum in Ruth Currier's own new work given at Juilliard on April 8.*

Four dance evenings at Juilliard

THE presence of Ruth St. Denis, America's First Lady of Dance (and current artist in residence at Adelphi College) *almost* overshadowed what took place on the stage. In ascending importance were : *Toccata,* a new work choreographed by Ruth Currier, that was beautifully danced by the choreographer, Betty Jones, Chester Wolenski and Harlan McCallum; a revival of Doris Humphrey's large group work, *Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor,* whose gloriously conceived dance designs eluded all but Philippine Bausch (she danced so superbly that she was invited on the spot to appear at Spoleto this summer); and José Limón's *Barren Sceptre,* a dance

re-telling of the Macbeth story set to Gunther Schuller's *Music for Violin, Piano and Percussion (1957).* Beautifully dressed by Pauline Lawrence, Limón appeared as the Thane and his Consort was Pauline Koner. Depending more on psychologically angled dance movement than his more compositionally conceived *The Moor's Pavane,* this was a bold, strong and deeply communicative work that was danced to the hilt by both José Limón and Pauline Koner.

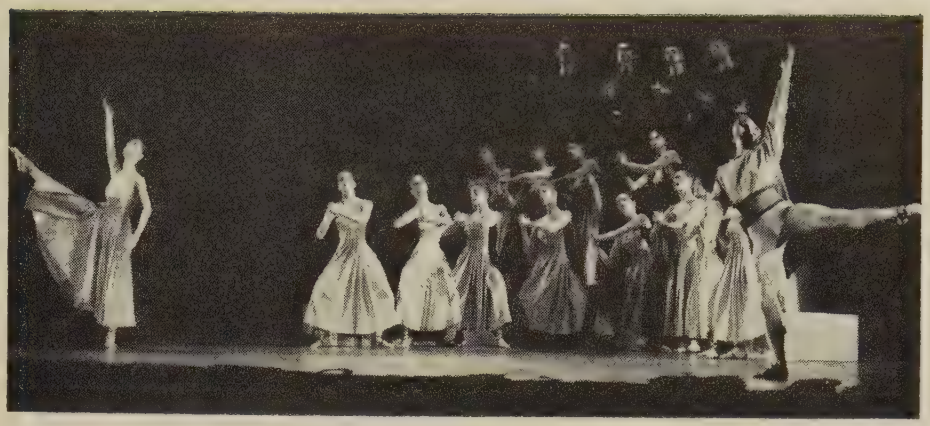
The so-called ballet evening was distinguished only by the premières of two works by Antony Tudor. The first, *A Choreographer Comments,* proved a delightfully devised concept of classroom techniques that had an artistic form and vitality all of its own. Similarly, the touching and charming *pas de deux, Little Improvisations* — choreographed in 1953 and now seen in its first New York performance — was a delight and quite obviously belongs in the repertoire of some far-sighted ballet company. All that one wished was that the Juilliard student level of dancing had been equal to Tudor's invention.

The best that can be said about Gilbert Reed's *The Clowns* is to add that it was obviously a first work and should have been shown only in a studio. Helmut Kluge's reconstruction of Raoul Feuillet's *circa* 1700 choreography of *Ballet de Neuf Dancers* and Louis Pecour's *Trois Entrées Espagnoles* found Juilliard's student dancers totally unprepared to cope with either their style or elegance. And the less said about La Méri's choreographic version of Vivaldi's *The Seasons* the better. Suffice to say, it was danced in Hindu style, and one could only feel embarrassed for the dancers concerned with it.

New Musicals

PARADE, a delightful little off-Broadway revue (almost a minor *Cranks,* in fact), was timely, topical and had a definite point of view. Richard Tone, previously known as Rudy Tone, a featured Broadway dancer, staged all the musical numbers and also provided two noteworthy solos for himself. "The Two A Day" was a brash portrait of a vaudeville hoofer while "The Audition" was a danced portrait of a young hopeful at a tryout. Since he is a strongly gifted technician in various styles, Richard Tone danced the latter at the top of his form. Elsewhere in the proceedings he provided fresh and delightful movement patterns for himself and his four co-players.

The new musical *Christine,* starring Maureen O'Hara, was adapted from the novel *My Indian Family.* Obviously this set out to be another *King and I* but the formula didn't work and what resulted was something more like a 1930 *Desert Song* set in India. Therefore, one can't blame Hanya Holm too much for the fact that the dances are not noteworthy. Outstanding was "The Divali Festival" as a dance number with its lighted candles and undulating dancers. Headed by Bhaskar, who quite obviously performs as if he were the answer to Ram Gopal and Shankar, this scene had a momentary uplifting effect on the goings-on that at best can be charitably termed as a poorly mixed Indian curry. Elsewhere, Miss Holm devised a pleasant little dance for Bhaskar and some Indian children that soon deteriorated into what reminded me of a Jack Cole night club number. Hanya Holm can console herself, however, with the knowledge that *Christine* will soon be forgotten but *My Fair Lady*



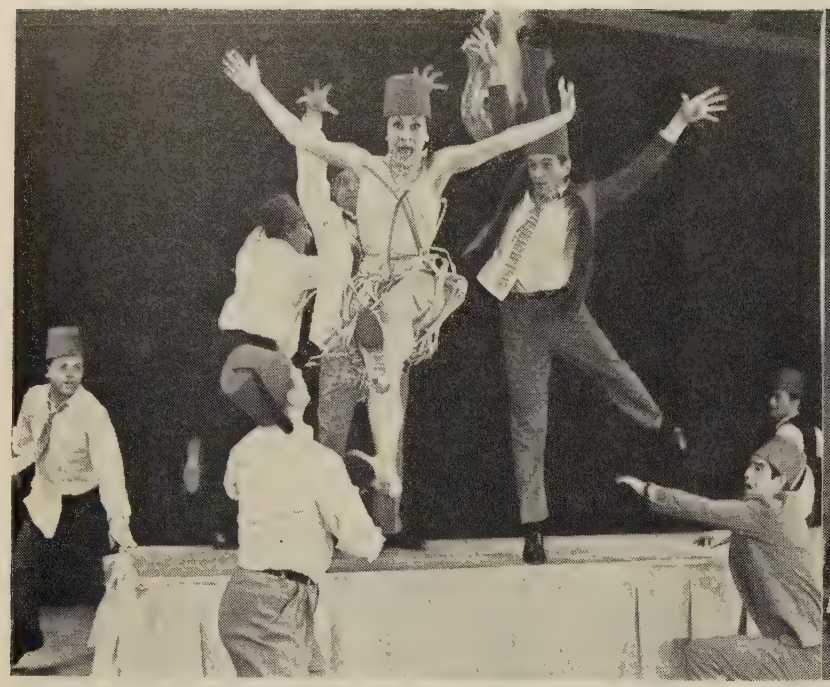
PASSACAGLIA: *Students of Juilliard's dance department in a revival of Doris Humphrey's work to the Bach* C Minor Passacaglia and Fugue, *also given on April 8.*

CHRISTINE: *Bhaskar, third from left, in the "Divali Festival" number from the new musical,* Christine, *for which Hanya Holm did the choreography.*

Photo: Fred Fehl.

BYE BYE BIRDIE *(below): "The Telephone Hour," one of the many excellent numbers choreographed by Gower Champion for this new smash-hit musical.*

Photo: Friedman-Abeles.



CHITA BACK ON BROADWAY: Chita Rivera, one of the big hits of West Side Story, *returned to America and scored an equal success in the new musical* Bye Bye Birdie. *She is seen here in two numbers from the show. Left in Gower Champion's Shriner's Ballet" and right she shows "How to Kill a Man". Photos: Friedman-Abeles.*

will just keep rolling along.

Broadway's answer to *Expresso Bongo* is *Bye Bye Birdie,* and the fact that it is the best musical of the 1959-60 season is due in no small measure to the enormous contributions made by Gower Champion, its director and choreographer. Its plot deals with an Elvis Presley-type of singer going off to the armed services. This sets the springboard for a group of teen-age rock-'n'-rollers that writhe and wriggle in a jungle gymnasium setting in a gyrating number called "The Telephone Hour". Later there is a wonderfully staged scene where these youngsters faint singly and in groups as their idol caterwauls a song.

Chita Rivera, who scored her first major success in *West Side Story* in New York and London, dances off with the honours of this musical. In a ballet, "How To Kill A Man," she dances three methods she might choose to dispose of her lover. Again, in the "Shriner's Ballet", she dances over, around and under a table of lodge men at a meeting and ends, finally, under it with seven men. Though she has grown considerably more mature in appearance, she is decidedly one of the most exciting Broadway dancers to achieve star billing since Gwen Verdon.

Gene Bayliss is programmed as Associate Choreographer and Tony Mordente (Chita Rivera's husband, who also appears in this production) is listed as assistant to Gower Champion. The music for the dances was arranged by John Morris.

The Figure in the Carpet

First given by New York City Ballet at New York City Center on April 13, 1960. Choreography by George Balanchine. Music by George Frederick Handel (Royal Fireworks Music **and** Water Music). **Designed and lit by Estaban Frances. Costumes executed by Karinska.**

VIOLETTE VERDY MELISSA HAYDEN
DIANA ADAMS PATRICIA McBRIDE
MARY HINKSON JACQUES D'AMBOISE EDWARD VILLELLA
FRANCISCO MONCION
ARTHUR MITCHELL
with soloists and *Corps de Ballet*

Scene 1. *The Sands of the Desert*

THE FIGURE IN THE CARPET: *Violette Verdy in the "Sands of the Desert" scene which opens Balanchine's new ballet. Photo: Martha Swope.*

PERSIANS: Left, Design by Esteban Frances for girls of the Persian Court (Photo: Martha Swope). Right, the realisation of these designs in a dance for the corps de ballet *in the second scene from* The Figure in the Carpet *(Photo: Friedman-Abeles).*

Scene 2. *The Weaving of the Carpet*
Scene 3. *The Building of the Palace*
Scene 4. *The Gardens of Paradise*
Scene 5. *The Fountains of Heaven*

THE undoubted highlight of the New York City Ballet's four-week season was the World Première of *The Figure in the Carpet*. Pictorially, this ballet is perhaps the most sumptuous new work ever mounted by an American company. More importantly, however, its choice of music proved inspired. Choreographically (as well as visually) it is a work of art and a work of genius.

STORY

DIVIDED into five sections, Balanchine has conceived this ballet as if it were an entertainment for the court of Louis XIV. Quite obviously, however, the first two sections of this hour-long ballet were not conceived in 18th-century terms. Rather, these two scenes serve as a preface to the latter part of the ballet and, since they were more or less produced in 20th-century terms, they may well appear to some as a conflict in artistic terms. Nevertheless, they utilise the score magnificently and are gloriously composed in their own right.

Scene One, The Sands of the Desert, finds Violette Verdy and a *corps* of eighteen girls dressed in beige chiffon dancing against billowing curtains of the same shade. Representing the shifting sands of the desert, this scene is beautifully realised and would be quite ravishing to watch from a choreographic point of view even if it were danced in practice costumes. This is followed by Scene Two, The Weaving of the Carpet, in which nomad tribesmen and their women criss-cross multi-coloured streamers into a pattern effect that indicates the eventual pattern that may be repeated in the carpet. Scene Three, The Building of the Palace, presents the entrance of the Iranian Court and the Reception of the Foreign Ambassadors, who appear in a series of *divertissements* representing France, Spain, America, China, Africa, Scotland. Finally, there is a *Grand Pas de Deux* for the Prince and Princess of Persia. The Fourth Scene, The Gardens of Paradise, illustrates the completion of the grand design of the carpet, and the Fifth Scene, the apotheosis, The Fountains of Heaven, is more or less a tableau which is completed by the inclusion of sparkling fountains of real water.

CHOREOGRAPHY

QUITE the opposite from his recent *Agon* and *Episodes*, the first two sec-

PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF LORRAINE: Edward Villella with Susan Borree and Suki Schorer in a pas de trois *during the Reception of the Foreign Ambassadors from Scene 2. Photo: Fehl.*

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF GRANADA: Judith Green and Francisco Moncion in the Spanish entrée *in scene 2 of* The Figure in the Carpet. *Their costume designs by Esteban Frances are on each side. Photos: Martha Swope.*

tions of this ballet show Balanchine at the height of his powers in creating flowingly lyric abstract dance. The Sands of the Desert is beautifully composed and the beige costumed dancers literally swirl and eddy about the stage. The Weaving of the Carpet is more formally and intricately devised and the complex interweavings of the dancers and the coloured streamers representing the threads of the carpet is quite a glorious scene in its own right. From thence onwards, the following three scenes are very much in the manner of a grand *divertissement,* and for these Balanchine has conceived fresh, inventive and delightful sequences. Particularly noteworthy are the six variations he has created for the foreign ambassadors and the *Grand Pas de Deux* is a very grand one indeed. Equally interesting, it seems to me, is the way Balanchine has built each of the rôles throughout this ballet to fit the specific qualities of the dancers he has chosen as participants and their variations are thus doubly exciting to watch.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF PERSIA: Melissa Hayden and Jacques d'Amboise in the Grand pas de deux *which ends the* divertissement *at the Reception of the Foreign Ambassadors. Photo: Fehl.*

DANCING

VIOLETTE VERDY has been given one of the most glorious rôles of her career in the first scene of this work and she dances it magnificently. So, too, do Melissa Hayden and Jacques d'Amboise who perform the *Grand Pas de Deux* with flashing brilliance. Francisco Moncion had both elegance and arrogance in his movement, as well he should, in his rôle as the Duke of Granada. Edward Villella, the continuingly rising star in this company, spent much of his variation in the air in a breathtaking series of leaps. In contrast, Nicholas Magallanes and Patricia McBride were charming and witty in their Chinese bit. Diana Adams moved enchantingly and lyrically in the Scottish variation and Mary Hinkson (borrowed from Martha Graham's company) and Arthur Mitchell were properly bright and bouncing as ambassadors from Africa. Throughout, the *corps* adapted themselves admirably to the wide variety of various national dance styles.

MUSIC

IT seems gratuitous to write of Handel's Royal Fireworks and Water Music other than to say that Balanchine has employed it to such beautiful ends that one might believe it had been especially created for his choreographic plans.

THE ONI OF IFE AND HIS CONSORT (above): Mary Hinkson and Arthur Mitchell in the African entrée with their Esteban Frances designs.

APOTHEOSIS (below): Melissa Hayden and Jacques d'Amboise in the Fountains of Heaven scene which ends The Figure in the Carpet. *In the background are fountains of real water and the completed design on the carpet.* *Photos: Martha Swope.*

DECOR

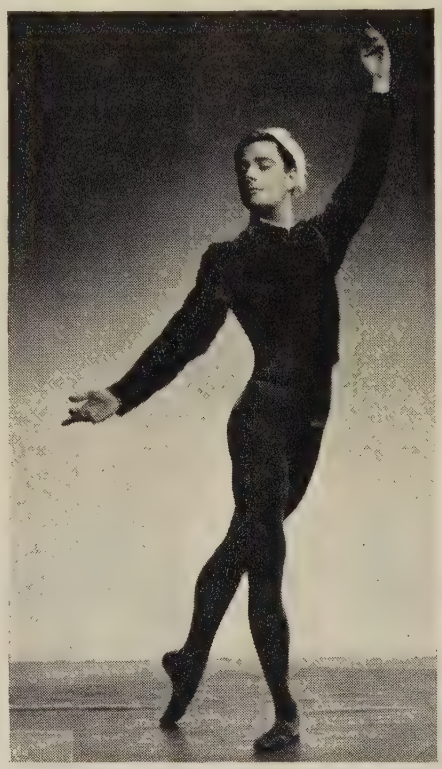
CERTAINLY a major share of the praise heaped upon this ballet is justifiably due to Esteban Frances for his ingeniously conceived scenery and for the superb taste he has used in the design of the gorgeous costumes. Karinska, who executed them, has bestowed upon them the full power of her craftsmanship and marvellous sense of colour and fabric. Unfortunately, none of the existing performance pictures of this ballet do full justice to its visual magnificence. Neither do they indicate the ingenious manner in which Mr. Frances has added to the central design of the carpet through successive scenes nor the marvellous way he unfolds and folds the walls of the palace. The apotheosis, The Fountains of Heaven, is a tableau which is completed by the inclusion of real water fountains. Though in print all of this may sound a bit like the Radio City Music Hall, it's not a bit like it. In its own right this work is a glorious experience in so far as choreography, dancing, music, settings and costumes are concerned. What more can one ask of a ballet?

Ballet Theatre's 20th Anniversary Season

IT is difficult to conceive of a more ill-planned programme than the one American Ballet Theatre mounted for its supposedly revitalised and "gala" return to the Met. William Dollar's *Chopin Concerto,* certainly one of the dullest ballets in existence, established a general air of gloom that rarely lifted for the balance of the evening. This, too, despite the fact that Erik Bruhn and Lupe Serrano danced in it. Next came a very indifferent re-staging of Antony Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* and an appallingly inept *pas de deux* by Serge Lifar, *Pas et Lignes.* This was booed vociferously from two spots in the house in the midst of its performance, which stirred the rest of the audience to an ovation for the two dancers, Claude Bessy and Royes Fernandez, and, sad to say, this was the only ovation of the evening. A completely remounted version of Fokine's *Bluebeard* (it must have cost a fortune, quite obviously) proved dated indeed and quite lacklustre in performance. Throughout the evening all of the dancers gave me the feeling that they were dancing under water, and quite dirty water at that, because they had been rehearsing so strenuously for the previous month that they were quite obviously exhausted.

For those among us who cheered the first performances of Ballet Theatre some twenty years ago, and who have loved, respected and supported it when it was at its height, the opening night and subsequent performances have been profoundly depressing. It would be tragic enough, indeed, if American Ballet Theatre were staying within our own borders. However, the prospect of sending a company that has obviously no artistic policy whatsoever to Europe and to Russia makes one shudder.

Variety, the weekly theatrical trade newspaper, headlined this fact in its April 27 issue as "Headed For, But Not Ready For, USSR: American Ballet Theatre's Anguish". This lengthy article went on to say, in part, "The United States stands in some danger of falling on its artistic face in Russia, homeland of ballet, by sending there, under State Department financing, a third-rate dance company . . . anybody pretending to professional dispassion must recognise that America's one chance to impress Russians lies in its modern choreography, not in tired old 'show-pieces'. . . . To sum up, Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith, respected though they are for their long years of devotion to the ballet medium, are up to their adagio in trouble, with the great Russian bear lying in wait only a few months off."



ROYES FERNANDEZ, one of the male stars of Ballet Theatre's 20th Anniversary season. Photo: Maurice Seymour.

Stars may come and stars may go, but the life-blood of any ballet company is in its *corps de ballet.* American Ballet Theatre's present one has only one member from its previous seasons left and, quite obviously, the balance, who are all new, have yet no sense of style or unity. Since dancers are always valiant, and American Ballet Theatre's are very much so indeed, they may very well pull themselves up by their boot-straps, as it were, as time goes on, but certainly this is no way to exhibit a company in the major cities of the world. In the circumstances, it might have been far wiser to mount fewer ballets but to produce each superbly.

Certainly the fact that Agnes de Mille and Eugene Loring have rehearsed their ballets has given these particular works some semblance of style. However, since neither Antony Tudor nor Jerome Robbins attended to their ballets in the repertoire, these masterpieces are currently in deplorable shape. Permitting Nora Kaye to "set" a revival of *Pillar of Fire* and letting the new members of the cast watch an old film of a performance is not the best way to establish the very vital gestural and movement qualities of this masterpiece. Neither was the returning Muriel Bentley able to re-"set" the wonderful initial bounce and vigour of Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free.*

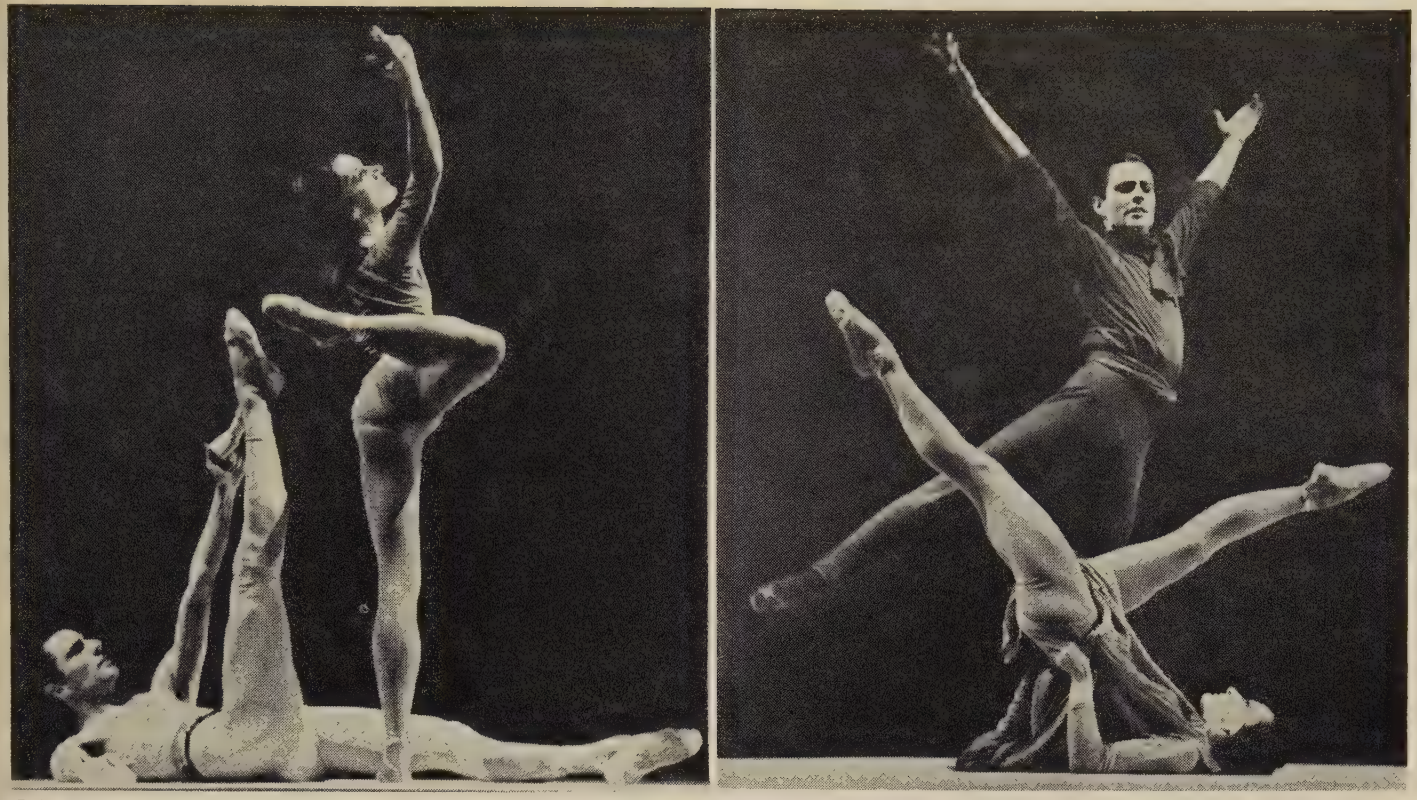
THE DANCERS

THE untimely illness of Alicia Markova set a pall over the whole season. Her presence certainly would have boosted the dancers' morale and no doubt would have been a considerable help at the box office. Due to the fact that Alicia Markova did not appear, *Giselle* did not sell out to capacity with standees as it always does at the Met. when she appears in it.

Erik Bruhn, who seems now to have become "accident prone" each time he returns to America, was out with an injury from after the first night for more than half of the season. Though he proved notable in his first two performances in the less demanding *Miss Julie,* he had to by-pass performing many of the *pas de deux* that are technical showpieces. Royes Fernandez, who has not danced in New York for the past year due to his foot injuries, proved worth waiting for and has given a marvellous account of himself throughout the season. Fernandez has a marvellous "romantic" quality and impact on stage that is similar but not like George Skibine's artistry. What's more, Fernandez has great lyricism, purity of line and innate taste and elegance. In addition to seemingly having been born to dance the great male classical rôles superbly, he is noteworthy, too, in such contemporary works as *Lady From the Sea.* Scott Douglas, likewise, has been a major asset to the company. His classical style is strong and he, too, has been outstanding in the more modern works as well.

Lupe Serrano, unquestionably, is the ballerina of the company as it stands today. She has enormous technical strength and power and when she adds greater warmth to her characterisations she is going to be one of the greatest American ballerinas of her day. Nora Kaye remains a genius when she performs in the Tudor and de Mille works created for her, but elsewhere she seems to have developed the habit of taking her Hagar characterisation over into all the other rôles she plays. This tortured anguish can be quite unsettling when it pops up inappropriately in an abstract work such as Herbert Ross's new *Dialogues.* On the other hand, Ruth Ann Koesun has danced delightfully in all her rôles this season.

Though neither of American Ballet Theatre's two new premières are going to make dance history, there have been many noteworthy performances throughout the season. Glen Tetley, a new soloist this season (it's already rumoured that he is to be elevated to principal ranking) has been outstanding for his quality of movement. Previously a ranking modern dancer, Tetley has not yet quite bridged the gap between the two styles, but, when he does, he'll be a considerable asset to any ballet company. Brazilian-born Ady Addor is a very lovely dancer and the fact that hardly anything in the repertoire fits her should not be held against her. Lucia Chase is still remarkable in the rôle of the Eldest Sister in *Pillar of Fire,* but Tommy Rall, in the former Hugh Laing rôle, dances the part like a hoofer with no concern for characterisation, for the rest of the cast in his relationships with them nor for the essential style of Tudor's ballet. Though Alicia Alonso's *Giselle* was a very Latin one, she was technically marvellous in the *Grand Pas de Deux* from *Don Quixote* as she danced it with the always magnificent



LADY FROM THE SEA: *Lupe Serrano, as Ellida, and Royes Fernandez, as the Sailor, in Birgit Cullberg's new ballet based on Ibsen for American Ballet Theatre.* *Photos: Fehl.*

Igor Youskevitch. Ivan Allen made one of the most enchanting First Cadets that we have had in seasons in *Graduation Ball* and Lupe Serrano and Royes Fernandez danced with dash and brilliance in a smart but un-Balanchine-like version of *Theme and Variations.*

Lady from the Sea

First given by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 20, 1950. Choreography by Birgit Cullberg, inspired by the play of Henrik Ibsen. Music by Knudaage Riisager. Designed by Kerstin Hedeby. Lighting by Jean Rosenthal.

Cast

Ellida ..... LUPE SERRANO
Sailor ..... ERIK BRUHN
Wangler, a Widower ... GLEN TETLEY
His Daughters ... ELIZABETH CARROLL
JANIE BARROW
The Sea ..... *Corps de Ballet*

STORY

ELLIDA loves a sailor who leaves her to return to the sea. After great hesitation she marries a widower, father of two daughters, but she feels encaged in his home and dreams that she rejoins her sailor-lover at the bottom of the sea. When the sailor actually returns, her husband offers her her freedom, but she does not leave him. The truth is, the sailor, like the sea, represents for her a romantic yearning, an escape from reality.

ANY new ballet by Birgit Cullberg is an event and, though it does not measure up to *Miss Julie* it is, in its own right, very interesting indeed. In her retelling of Henrik Ibsen's play, Cullberg has been notably aided by a moody and atmospheric score by Knudaage Riisager and by the settings and costumes designed by Kerstin Hedeby.

Perhaps the outstanding section of this work is the choreographer's wonderful use of a large group of dancers to indicate the turbulence and the restless flow and ebb of the sea itself. Indeed, this is one of the most creatively ingenious approaches one can imagine to capture the spirit of the sea, and the fact that it is probably the high point of this work is no reflection on Birgit Cullberg's handling of characters and their motivation. She devised emotionally believable actions for Lupe Serrano and sweepingly open and free designs for the Sailor. Royes Fernandez, replacing the ailing Erik Bruhn, brought a romantic quality to this rôle that would be difficult to surpass. Glen Tetley, likewise, found himself very much at home in the movement style the choreographer evolved for the rôle of Wangler, the Widower, and Elizabeth Carroll and Janie Barrow were delightful as his two daughters. Although Jean Rosenthal's wave-lit blue cyclorama was not always in focus, the garden-like transparent scrim setting was both inventive and visually effective.

Dialogues

(Serenade for Seven)

First given by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 26, 1960. Choreography by Herbert Ross. Music by Leonard Bernstein (Serenade for solo Violin, Strings and Percussion). **Décor and lighting by Jean Rosenthal. Costumes by Florence Klotz.**

1. *Phaedrus* (Lento) ... SCOTT DOUGLAS
2. *Pausanius (Allegro)* ... NORA KAYE, CHRISTINE MAYER, SCOTT DOUGLAS, GLEN TETLEY, TOMMY RALL
3. *Aristophanes* (Allegretto) ADY ADDOR, ROYES FERNANDEZ
4. *Erixymachus* (Presto)...GLEN TETLEY
5. *Agathon* (Adagio) ..... NORA KAYE, SCOTT DOUGLAS
6. *Socrates* (Musical Interlude)
7. *Alcibiades* ..... All Seven Dancers

IN describing his music, Leonard Bernstein has written: "There is no literal programme for the *Serenade,* despite the fact that it resulted from a re-reading of Plato's charming dialogue *The Symposium.* The music, like the dialogue, is a series of related statements in praise of love, and generally follows the Platonic form through the succession of speakers at the banquet.

"The choreographer has also sought inspiration in *The Symposium* and, using techniques of the classical dance, has attempted to give visual form to the dialogues. The dance movements, like those of the score, are not intended to represent a literal transcription of Plato's text."

AS far as I can see, neither Herbert Ross's choreography nor Leonard Bernstein's initial musical inspiration derives from anything remotely related to Plato's *The Symposium.* Neither, as a matter of fact, could I find very much to do with love or good choreography in this work. Perhaps John Martin hit the nail on the head when he wrote in *The New York Times*: "What he has turned out is more like an Ivy League version of Jerome Robbins' *Interplay.*" Perhaps, because for once, at least, the management sees eye to eye with Mr. Martin, they have not even bothered to have this work photographed.

MARTHA GRAHAM: Owing to lack of space, it has been impossible to include the review and pictures of Martha Graham's very important New York season in this number. This together with many pictures of her two new creations—Acrobats of Gods and Alcestis—**will appear in the July issue.**

Romantic Ballerinas in Dublin

3. CARLOTTA GRISI

Introduced by IVOR GUEST

LA ESMERALDA: *Carlotta Grisi, as Esmeralda, with Jules Perrot, the choreographer, in the rôle of Pierre Gringoire. This ballet, with Pugni music, was first given at Her Majesty's Theatre in London in 1844 and in St. Petersburg four years later. (Collection: W. B. Morris)*

IN 1846, Carlotta Grisi — doubly renowned as the first Giselle and the first Esmeralda — acquired yet another token of of her fame, when one of the horses entered for the Oaks — "a very racing-like and promising filly" — was named Giselle after her greatest rôle. London did not see her that summer, but she found time to travel to Dublin and fulfil a short engagement at the Theatre Royal, appearing there in several of her most successful rôles.

Mr. Calcraft, the manager of the theatre, emphasised the "enormous expense" he had gone to in engaging this "unrivalled dancer" (this was the formula he invariably used in announcing the engagement of great ballerinas), to support whom he had brought over an efficient group of dancers including James Silvain (alias Sullivan), an old favourite in Dublin, and the French male dancer, Francis Berthier.

Carlotta made her first appearance in Dublin on July 18 in *La Diable à Quatre*, one of her latest creations, a ballet with choreography by Mazilier and music by Adolphe Adam, produced at the Paris Opéra the previous August. Among the fashionable audience that packed into the house to see her Irish début was the critic of the *Freeman's Journal*, whose review appeared on Monday.

"IN order," he wrote, "to speak fully of the merits of Carlotta Grisi it would be well to have seen her in some other ballet, as we are certain there are several characters in her repertoire which would exhibit her powers to better advantage than that of Saturday evening. We think *La Diable à Quatre* has been rather overrated, we should designate it as 'an amusing *trifle*', and no more.

"C. Grisi cannot be compared with any of her fair sister *ballerines* whom we have seen; her style is essentially dissimilar from them all. Hers is not the easy but majestic grace of Taglioni — the floating revolutions, the arial *pas* of Cerrito, nor the fawn-like elegance and rapid bound of — in our judgment — the inimitable Elssler. There is one quality — and but one — common to them all; and it is the power of producing the most electrifying effect with apparently an utter absence of all effort. For the rest, we should say the great characteristic of C. Grisi is a *naïve* and *piquant* archness of manner, and a rapid and brilliant execution of difficult and intricate dancing, which gives truth to a part of a description of her, that we have somewhere read, in which the writer spoke of her 'twinkling feet'. The final *pas de deux* was beautifully executed, and elicited most rapturous applause.

"The ballet is founded on the well-known farce *The Devil to Pay*, in which the shrewish wife of a nobleman is transferred to the cottage of a basket-maker, whilst asleep — the basket-maker's wife being in turn carried to the castle. C. Grisi's admirable and expressive pantomime when she awakes to her state, her toilet, breakfast scene and dancing lesson were inimitable; and we must not omit to notice with approbation the performance of Mlle Louise, the artiste who represented the metamorphosed lady: her excellent pantomime — whilst undergoing the unusual and somewhat rough exercise of conjugal authority at the hands of the basket-maker — was extremely amusing and effective. The other members of the *corps* had but little to do; that little they all — especially M. Silvain — did carefully and well."

CARLOTTA'S next rôle offered greater interest. She it was who had created the rôle of Giselle at the Paris Opéra five years before, but Dublin had first seen the ballet with Fanny Elssler, and Carlotta therefore had to face comparison with the performance of the most dramatic ballerina of Romantic times when *Giselle* replaced *La Diable à Quatre* on July 21. She was well served by the supporting cast — Silvain (who probably played Albrecht notwithstanding the announcement), Berthier and Louise — but the orchestra playing was disastrously atrocious.

The critic of the *Freeman's Journal*, however, who clearly knew his ballet and his ballerinas, wrote a masterly notice. "We cannot say we think her part in the ballet," he wrote, "better adapted to the powers of Carlotta than that in which she appeared on Saturday, and we are fully confirmed in our estimate of her abilities as formed upon that occasion — the basis in any part in which she is to be *eminently* successful must be *naïveté* and *piquant* archness of deportment and style.

"The aerial lightness of her motions; the perfect ease with which the most intricate evolutions are performed; and her power of assuming an attitude of motionless repose, and of sylph-like grace, in the midst of the most extraordinary muscular exertion, are truly astonishing; and most, if not all, of those qualities have an equal tendency to delight as to surprise. But that she rivals the *divine Elssler* in the power of expressing excess of feeling, or depth of emotion, or in that wonderful harmony of powers and attributes which that gifted being so intensely feels — else could she not so beautifully portray it — is an assertion which to make would be to praise without discrimination, and therefore to render commendation worthless. We have often deprecated invidious comparisons, and we are not now desirous of departing from

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AN ADVERTISEMENT from the Dublin Freeman's Journal, *of July 21, 1846, which announced Carlotta Grisi's engagement at the Theatre Royal.*

THEATRE ROYAL, DUBLIN.

Third Appearance in Ireland of the unrivalled Dancer, Mdlle. CARLOTTA GRISI, who is engaged for FIVE NIGHTS ONLY, supported by the following Eminent Artistes:—Mdlle. LOUISE, Mdlle. ADELE, Mons. ADRIEN, Mons. BERTHIER, and Mons. SILVAIN.

THIS PRESENT TUESDAY, 21st July, 1846, the performances will commence with the Petite Comedy of

DID YOU EVER SEND YOUR WIFE TO KINGSTOWN?

Mr. Honeyban, Mr. Baker; Mr. Crank, Mr. J. Penson; Mrs. Honeyban, Miss Chalmers.

After which will be produced the grand romantic Ballet, in two acts, called

GISELLE;

OR, THE WILIS.

Giselle, Mademoiselle Carlotta Grisi; Martha, Mademoiselle Louise; Duke of Silesia, Monsieur Silvain; Hilarion, Monsieur Adrien; Loys, Monsieur Berthier; Leola, Mademoiselle Adele.

To conclude with the Farce of

LOVE, LAW, AND PHYSIC.

Lubin Log, Mr. Baker; Mrs. Hilary, Mrs. Archbold.

In consequence of the enormous expense the prices will be as during the former engagements of Mdlle. Taglioni, and Mdlle. Elssler.

Dress Boxes, 6s.; Second Circle, 4s.; Pit, 2s. 6d.; First Gallery, 1s. 6d.; Second Gallery, 1s.

Second price 5/- Half-past Nine o'Clock—Dress Boxes, 3s.; Second Circle, 2s.; Pit, 1s. 6d.; First Gallery, 1s.; Second Galleries, 6d.

The doors will open at Seven o'Clock, and the performances will commence at Half-past Seven.

Tickets and places to be had of Mr. Joy, at the Box Office, from Eleven to Four.

our established principle. We have said that those fair competitors for fame are 'essentially different in style' — let us now add that each is *proudly triumphant in her own*".

Dublin's final glimpse of Carlotta was in the Truandaise in the first scene of *La Esmeralda* — "the dance where she invites the pursuit of her lover, alternately offering and withdrawing her hand" — which she danced at her last performance at the Theatre Royal, for Calcraft's benefit. The critic of the *Freeman's Journal* regretted she had not appeared in the complete ballet, one of the master-works of the Romantic ballet, but Carlotta slipped away, bound for Paris, leaving her Irish admirers with only this tantalising glimpse of her Esmeralda.

GISELLE *(right): Carlotta Grisi in the title rôle which she created in the most famous of all Romantic ballets first given in Paris in 1841. She is seen with Jules Perrot as Albrecht.*
(Collection: Peter Revitt)

LE BAISER DE LA FEE

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blended them in with original melodic material and harmonisation of his own invention. The result is a score which is partly pastiche, partly a devilishly clever compound of personalities fused together and which, for good measure, corresponds in its four scenes and epilogue to the overall plan and contrasting moods of a Tchaikovsky symphony.

Stravinsky always professed a genuine love for Tchaikovsky, even when it meant striking an attitude in the face of the opinions of his contemporaries. He dedicated the one-act opera *Mavra* in 1922 to Tchaikovsky, Glinka and Pushkin, the year after his celebrated open letter to Diaghilev about the revival of *The Sleeping Beauty*. He often made a point of conducting the first three, rarely-heard Tchaikovsky symphonies at concerts, and he reaffirmed his admiration in 1941 when he orchestrated the "Blue Bird" *pas de deux* for chamber *ensemble*.

His major tribute, however, was paid in *The Fairy's Kiss* (I cannot share the Royal Ballet's curious preference for the French title any more than for *Swan Lake*, and there is nothing remotely French about *that* either). Superficially *The Fairy's Kiss* resembles Stravinsky's treatment of Pergolesi in *Pulcinella* and of Bach in the *Variations on "Von Himmel Hoch"*, but Tchaikovsky has not merely been given a fresh instrumentation and developed harmonisation. It is quite considerably a work of re-composition, after the manner of those sculptors and painters who set out to transform existing materials.

Nevertheless, the musical impact of the work seems to me weak for a composer of Stravinsky's calibre. Partly I feel this is due to his choice of Tchaikovsky sources, and partly because he spreads them too thinly over his musical canvas. Among the Tchaikovsky melodies he uses are the *Humoresque* (Op. 10, No. 2), most prominently in the village fair scene, the *Natha-Valse* (Op. 51, No. 4) later in the same scene, the *Feuillet d'album* (Op. 19, No. 3) in the third scene, the *Nocturne* (Op. 19, No.) for the central *pas de deux* and the *Scherzo humoristique* (Op. 19, No. 2), for the Fiancée's *variation*. The Fairy's triumphant seduction is unmistakably the celebrated Goethe romance, *None but the Lonely Heart* (Op. 6, No. 6).

With the exception of the last piece, none is really first-rate Tchaikovsky, whose genius was strongest in his sheer melodic invention. On the other hand, the particular qualities of these pieces lent themselves more easily to Stravinsky's craft of transformation than melodies of finer strain would have done. He was able to make the best of both worlds at considerably less effort than would have been needed to create an entirely original score. Many of Stravinsky's adaptations certainly have great musical distinction — the sense of desolation in the Prologue, the grotesque combination of polka and waltz at the Fair (lacking only *Petrushka's* Blackamoor, it seems!) and the climax of the Fairy's seduction are three of the most impressive passages.

Each of these made its effect on the first night, when the Sadler's Wells conductor, Colin Davis, who has shown himself exceptionally gifted in handling Stravinsky, directed the orchestra in his first ballet at Covent Garden. He secured playing of a much higher standard than the Royal Ballet usually brings upon itself, yet the performance had its *longueurs* as much in the orchestral playing as also (for me) in the dancing. I regretted not being able to attend a later performance, for I suspect this was to some extent due to a conductor-choreographer relationship not then fully established, with some lingering uncertainty on both sides about the precise choreographic pace here and there. But the fault is as much inherent in the music itself, being so often lacklustre in character by comparison with the original work of either composer. Now that MacMillan has tucked this under his belt, I for one wish he would give us Stravinsky's *Orpheus*, which has some claim to be the composer's finest score for ballet.

Noël Goodwin

DECOR

AT the risk of killing off all James Barrie's Tinkerbells it is time to come out with the plain truth — fairyland has become a crashing bore. Not only fairyland but, as far as ballet is concerned, so have all those tedious little village incidents which take place in the pastoral regions of ballet's never-never land. In *Baiser de la Fée* there are both these localities, and my heart went out to Kenneth Rowell, who had to design them, though of course he may possibly not share my personal aversion. But whichever way you feel there is only one course open to the designer and that is to turn immediately to the music and squeeze out of it what it has to say. Stravinsky's score is a homage, and a very sincere one, to Tchaikovsky, and this means that there is bound to be a certain richness about it. On the other hand there is still enough of Stravinsky's astringency to counteract the saccharine of conventional fairyland. All of which means that the designer is let off those mushy landscapes, those curtains of dripping improbable flowers, those giant toadstools and all the usual horrid paraphernalia of fairy kingdoms. In fact the situation is not far removed from the one facing Tchelitchev when he was asked to design Giroudoux's dramatic version of the Ondine story — namely to create a supernatural place untouched by 19th-century Romanticism. This problem Tchelitchev overcame triumphantly and what he did still remains amongst the great theatrical designing masterpieces of this century.

Rowell's designing territory lies somewhere half-way between Tchelitchev and Max Ernst. It is an abstract world full of veins, rock stratas, gorges, caverns ominous icebergs. It is a threatening world which looks as though it would swallow up the village of the Bride and Bridegroom, swallow it up and then spew it out again. Rather than a land of midnight sun it is a land of midday moon. Tchaikovsky is essentially a "Winter" composer and most of his music is concerned with dying leaves and falling snows and few rippling brooks or lush spring pastures disturb his desolate landscape.

This, Stravinsky has masterfully captured in his "homage" and this has sparked-off Rowell's whole approach to

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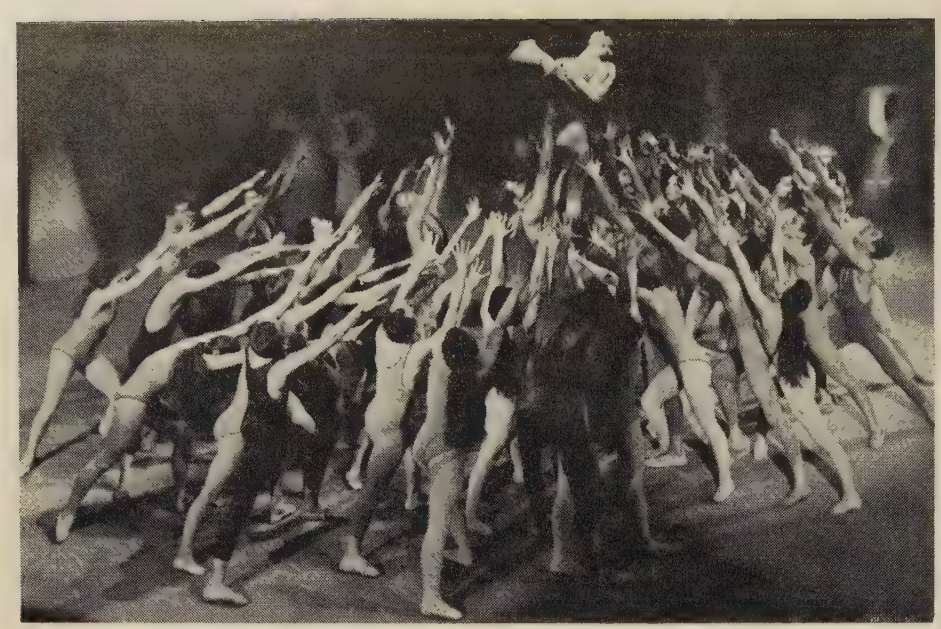


CULMINATION: Tania Bari, as the Chosen Girl, and Germinal Casado, as the Chosen Boy, in the final moment of Béjart's version of Stravinsky's Le Sacre du Printemps.

What We Thought of the T.R.M.

Two opinions of the season at Sadler's Wells by the Théâtre Royal de Monnaie, combining a company from that theatre with the companies of Maurice Béjart, Janine Charrat and Western Theatre Ballet.

From PETER WILLIAMS

FOUR companies combining in one season and not a sign of *Les Sylphides* or extracts from *Swan Lake* or any other well-worn stand-bys amongst the lot — that's something, isn't it? What is more this collective group, known as T.R.M. (Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie), had a decided success during their week-long season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, which may have confounded some of those who say that the public keep away from programmes lacking the aforementioned classics. What the companies of the Monnaie, of Maurice Béjart, of Janine Charrat and of Western Theatre Ballet presented were mostly dramatic works of a rather sensational nature. Admittedly the "sensations" were sometimes of a decidedly minor variety, but that three programmes can put over sex, madness and murder in as strong terms as we are likely to have in ballet as long as there is a censor, is a welcome change from fairy glades and pastoral romps.

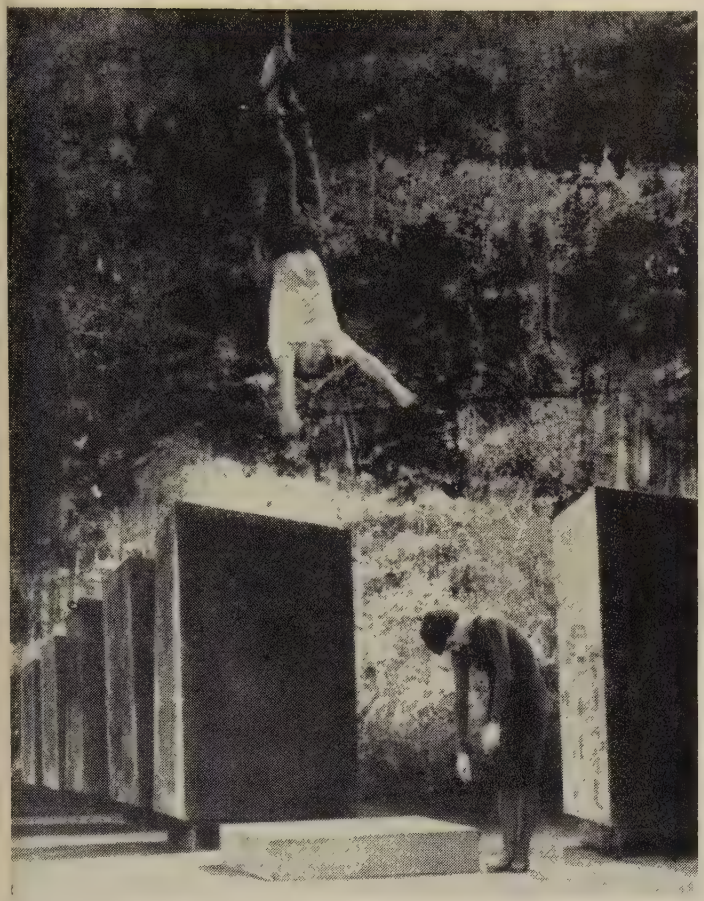
THE CHOSEN GIRL: Tania Bari as the Chosen Girl in the second, and female, part of Le Sacre du Printemps.

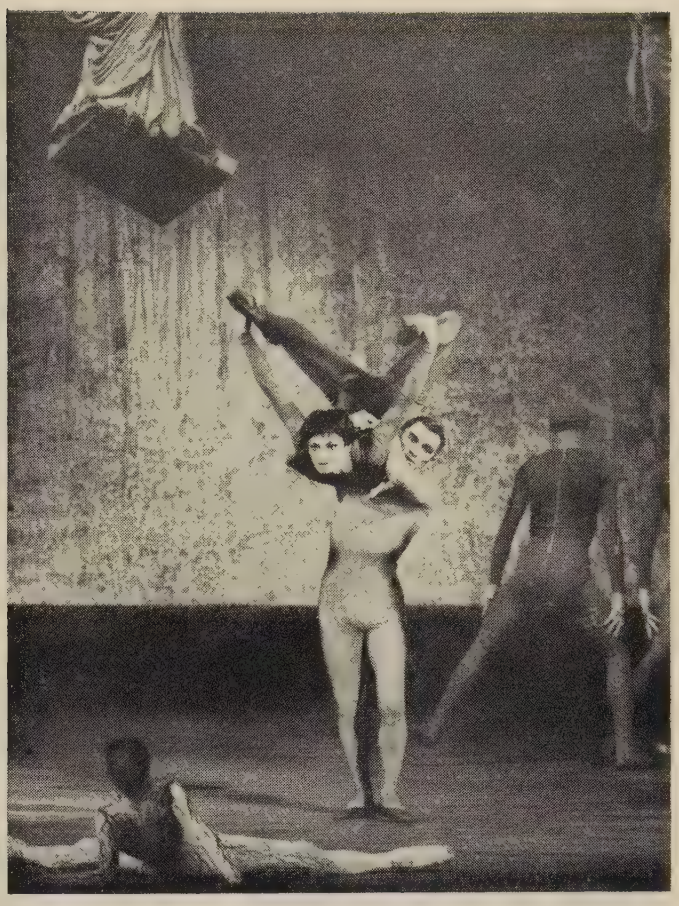
Apart from Michel St. Denis's admirable production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, equally well sung by the Sadler's Wells Opera company and played by the Monnaie orchestra conducted by Colin Davis, the ballets were the work of Béjart, Charrat and Peter Darrell.

This was the first occasion that London had the chance of seeing what Béjart has been doing recently, and it was rather a pity that the two ballets shown, *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Orphée (La Symphonie pour un Homme Seul* was promised but did not materialise owing to an ankle injury which Béjart sustained) did not really show the full and very varied range of his particular creative genius. When I think back on his *Haut Voltage, Juliette* and other works, there was a decided sameness about the movement in the works shown at the Wells.

On his own admission at a press conference, it was made clear that it was the Monnaie that wanted him to create a ballet to the Stravinsky *Sacre* music — rather than it being something that he was burning to do. After having soaked himself in the score he consented, and who can blame him, as it still has a compelling power. He has, rightly I think, eschewed the original promitive ritual culminating in the chosen virgin dancing deliriously to her death which was the basis of both Nijinsky's and Massine's ballets. Rather has he concentrated on the "Spring" aspect of the idea — of the re-birth of human desire, of the awareness of physical urges, of the need for a partner and of eventual consummation. After all, just look about the countryside, or the London parks, and you soon become aware of what Spring is all about.

The work falls into two sections — male and female, culminating in an intermingling of the two in general copulation. Atavism is well conveyed in the male section with its sense of ancestor worship as the nineteen men rise up one by one, become aware of the life-blood coursing through their veins, of the power of their limbs and of their blind obedience to some power unknown to them but symbolised by an immense father-figure sculpture which could also be the elephant-mother of creation. Some of the movement is interesting, especially a use of deep *plié à la seconde*, certain torso contractions with grotesque *demi-seconde* arm positions. Eventually they all leap off in frog-like jumps in search of a mate. Longueur started to set in with the female section, led by beautiful blonde Tania Bari, and the opening passages of this second part were rather uninventive. By sheer weight of musical force and general mass movement the ballet worked up to a climax, but even the mating all seemed too reminiscent of Swedish drill. In spite of the fact that the choreography was very musical there seems something rather *demodé* about these mass-movement ballets and this was not alleviated by the fact that Germinal Casado was not forceful enough as the Chosen Man while the skin-coloured 'twenties bathing-dress costumes





ORPHEE : *Left, Orphée (Béjart) dies and is mourned by his Shadow (Michele Seigneuret) in the 7th tableau of* Orphée. *Right, Béjart and Seigneuret in the last scene from the ballet.*

of Pierre Caille were a lazy way of getting out of designing body covering.

The designer's sculptured scenery was far more interesting, though ruined by the restricted dimensions of the Wells stage. His ancestor image, of the opening scene, obviously needed to be balanced by surrounding space; while his perspective of phallic symbols, in the second scene, needed great depth. Neither conception was helped by being shown against conventional black velvets, though towards the end of the ballet these were whisked away and a sky-cloth suddenly made the sculptured objects seem as though they belonged. In spite of the weaknesses of the conception there is no getting away from the fact that a theatrical impact was achieved — even if it did not bear looking into too closely.

After several abortive attempts at trying to see Béjart's full length work, *Orphée,* in various parts of the world, I still feel that I have not really seen it because at the only Wells performance (the other two were cancelled owing to Béjart's injury) a lot of the scenery was missing (owing to trouble with L.C.C. fire regulations), the work was unrehearsed in London so that the scenes never followed each other in quick succession, and at one point the curtain was lowered too quickly so that a whole dance for Seigneuret was never seen. Under such circumstances it would be better to refrain from much comment on this version of the "journeying boy", the poet who seeks but is always alone and who only finds recognition in death. From what I could see I would think that Béjart's particular style has not yet been broadened enough to stretch-out into a full-evening work.

He has gone to sources, both Oriental and occidental, for his ideas, and at one moment in a scene called "Tam-Tam" we had almost unadulterated Kathakali. At other times there was too much reliance on movements that have almost become Béjart *clichés,* and I can never get used to the sudden intrusion of pure classical movement — *attitudes, arabesques* and *pirouettes* — in works of this kind. On the other hand there are long passages of great beauty and originality in almost everything done by Orphée (Béjart) with his Shadow (Seigneuret). He is a virile and extremely exciting dancer and he has given himself what must amount to one of the most exhausting rôles of our time — throughout the whole work's length he never appeared to tire. Seigneuret is a fascinating serpentine beauty with a flexible boneless body slithering and sliding through the ballet and around the body of her material self.

The whole work is chock-full of dramatic ideas, so many in fact that by the end they tend to lose their sense of drama, though it is a welcome change to find somebody in ballet has the courage to mix movement with something almost approaching *grand guignol.* We may like it or we may hate it, but the fact that we remember it means that we cannot ignore it. The admixture of everyday sounds with music was the result of two years' collaboration with Béjart and composer Pierre Henry. Unlike some people I found it wholly inoffensive and at times very exciting and stimulating, and far more related to dance than are some of those "record shop" choices which many choreographers have the impertinence to tack on to their choreographic ideas. Rudolf Küfner's designs, which saw the Orpheus legend in a strange grey world of nightmare images and shapes, was wholly admirable, or doubtless would have been if we could have seen them whole.

A third Béjart work was shoved in at the last moment to replace *La Symphonie pour un Homme Seul.* This was Western Theatre Ballet's version of *Sonate à Trois.* Although the English dancers did most of the same steps that I can remember when I saw it first done by Béjart, Seigneuret and Bari, it is there that any similarity ends. The original artists made *Huis Clos* of Sartre into a seeringly powerful piece of theatre — damned souls reaching out for each other in an infernal daisy-chain. The English dancers make it a daisy chain — of daisies.

Three works by Charrat, two well-known (*Les Algues* and *Concerto de Grieg)* and one new *(Fantasie Concertante* to Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto). The "Fantaisie" aspect of the Prokofiev was certainly underlined in the oddest way. René Bon made an agile Joker in the first movement. Juan Giuliano was stunningly athletic in the second movement, while Milenko Banovitch was equally athletic in a general pole-vaulting jamboree in the last movement. All of which may have been in homage to this year's Olympic Games in Rome but had little to do with either ballet or Prokofiev's undistinguished concerto. The girls came off very second-best and not

TRANSFIGURATION: After death, Orphée is restored to life and his song is heard by the crowd. Béjart, in the title rôle, with his inevitable shadow, in one of the final moments of his full-evening work based on the "Orpheus" legend.

even Charrat herself could make much of a *pas de deux* she danced in the second movement. Disappointing was the work of that usually fine designer, Jacques Dupont, whose scaffolding against a weathered sky cloth and ill-fitting overalls for the boys looked haphazard and amateurish and the sort of designing we had hoped passed out with the 'thirties.

The mechanics of Charrat's Lifaresque choreography to the first two movements of the Grieg Piano Concerto have become rather obvious over the years, but nothing detracts from the fact that it is splendidly danced. Charrat herself has a beautiful liquid line ideally suited to this kind of thing and she was well-partnered by Juan Guiliano, a forceful dancer who rather lacked the sensitivity of Peter Van Dijk, who used to dance with Charrat in this work in the past.

Quite outstanding, however, is Charrat's performance of the hapless Catherine in her *Les Algues*. This study of a girl who becomes unbalanced when she discovers the force of physical desire and is committed to an asylum is one of the great female dramatic rôles of our time. How beautifully controlled is her madness and how aqueous are her limbs, like the seaweed from which the ballet takes its title. It amounts to a gorgeous piece of dancing and a profoundly moving piece of playing. In other places the ballet has lost some details by the wayside — particularly in the wind-tossed streamers which used to blow so emptily as the unhappy couple left the ballroom where Catherine's madness first became apparent and also in the characterisation of the various inmates — even so the work still leaves a profound impression.

As Georges Emile Guerain, the lover who feigns madness in order to be with Catherine in her world of hallucination, Milenko Banovitch played well. He was, though, rather too handsome and suave, and never quite conveyed the ordinariness and the drabness of real life which Van Dijk originally achieved. Outstanding also was Ronnie Aul, a Negro dancer who made the Erotic Man a frenzied sex-maniac. I think it is time that Louis Bertrand Castelli returned from America to polish-up and restore certain features to his brain-child and which still remains one of the most complete and remarkable dance-theatre experiments to have come from France since the war.

The only work by Peter Darrell shown was *The Prisoners*, a powerful dramatic work most excellently played by Western Theatre Ballet and which has previously been reviewed in *Dance and Dancers*. But further acquaintance with this ballet makes his use of the Bartok *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* even more disturbing. To cut the first movement in half for the purposes of the narrative is near sacrilege in a work that is so complete that any extraneous additions, such as a story ballet, are completely superfluous. Barry Kay's designs remain the most distinguished feature of the whole work.

So there you have it, a season of heights and depths, exhilarating and exasperating and everything that ballet needs to inject new life into an art which comes perilously near, at times, to becoming atrophic. All strength to the T.R.M. therefore and may their praiseworthy efforts meet with success and, please, let us see all these efforts. Apart from anything else, how wonderful to hear music so well-played as it undoubtedly was by the native Brussels orchestra.

From CLIVE BARNES

ON the only occasion I found myself in Brussels, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie was depressingly closed. However, even from the outside it looked a solid, respectable institution. Now, having seen their ballet company give a week's season at Sadler's Wells, I can see that I was fooled. The place is nothing but a seething, writhing spawning-ground for revolt! It quite obviously stands for the very opposite of all those stolid and solid establishmentarian values that every well-adjusted state opera house ought to uphold to the last drop of its sawdust. And all I can say is: "Two cheers for the Monnaie!" — and I promise to give them the other cheer just as soon as their

achievements match their aspirations.

To find a State opera house way out in front of the *avant garde* is, after all, a singular and invigorating thing, but it must be immediately admitted that the Monnaie has only recently taken up this unusual vantage point. The man responsible for the revolution is Maurice Huisman, who last year was invited to become Director of the Theatre after a distinguished career as a commercial impresario.

Huisman, flailing his new broom with energetic abandon, started his wholesale regime of reform with two measures calculated to shake the all-too-solid foundations of his moribund opera house. He first contracted a loose but rewarding association with our own lively Sadler's Wells Theatre, and then he decided to do something radical about the ballet at the Monnaie, realising that this was more susceptible to sudden change than its more sedate sister, opera. He took the existing Opera Ballet that was part of the pension-structure of the theatre, and invited three or four of Europe's outstanding *avant garde* groups to make a temporary home at the Monnaie, and consequently dancers and ballets from the companies of Maurice Béjart, Janine Charrat and Milorad Miskovitch, together with Britain's Western Theatre Ballet, have all appeared there during the past season. It was the culmination of both this ballet policy as well as the first year of collaboration with the Sadler's Wells, that led to all of these companies — with the exclusion of the unavailable Miskovitch group — giving this joint season in Rosebury Avenue.

For Londoners probably the main interest of the season was centred on the personality and ballets of Maurice Béjart. Naturally we are always glad to re-welcome Janine Charrat, and our not always latent chauvinism received a boost from seeing the Western Theatre Ballet in such a distinguished gathering, but Béjart was the mysterious, unknown factor — the much-talked about choreographer London had never, or rather hardly ever, seen.

He produced two-and-a-bit ballets during the season, *Le Sacre du Printemps, Orphée* and *Sonate à Trois*. I have called this last work a "bit" because, unheralded and unrehearsed, it was thrown on to the stage at literally a moment's notice, when it became apparent that a leg injury to Béjart would not permit the expected presentation of *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul,* which has now the unusual distinction of having been twice announced for London (for it was part of the projected Béjart season that failed to materialise last year) and yet never given.

London did not have long to wait for their first sight of Béjart this season, for his new version of *Le Sacre* was included on the first-night Gala performance in a hands-across-the-Channel, double-harness programme with the Sadler's Wells Opera's production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. Being out of town for that night, I made my first acquaintance with the season the next evening, when Béjart gave his full-length *Orphée*. Although I am not sure whether it provided the best introduction to the Béjart company, I found it both terribly interesting and interestingly terrible.

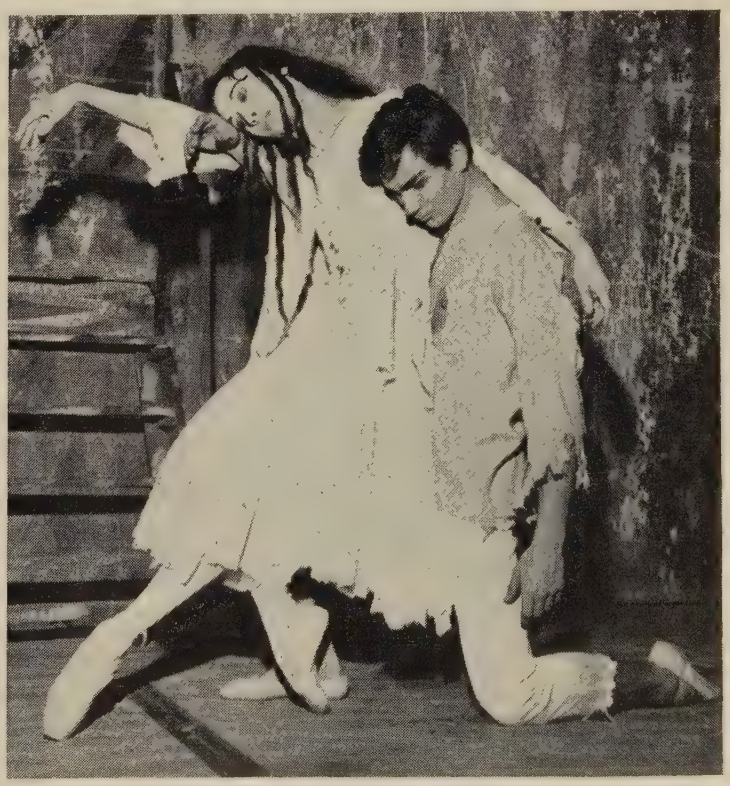
To my intense regret this ballet was only given once in London, its two subsequent performances being wiped out by the same blow of fate that cancelled *Symphonie pour un Homme Seul*. This was a pity, as it not only seemed at first sight to be one hell of a ballet, it was definitely one hell of a ballet to have to assess at a single viewing. Adding to the difficulties of getting the work in fair perspective was the non-appearance of certain parts of the scenery, which had failed to satisfy the requirements of the L.C.C. fire regulations, and the concomitant misfortune that the ensuing arguments had led to the ballet not having a stage rehearsal before its London première. But however many sympathetic allowances one made, I still felt that choreographically at least this was the most banal work I have ever seen from the hands of someone with the reputation of a major choreographer.

To produce a full-evening ballet to the clunks and squeaks of *musique concrète* — even when it is as amiable as that produced here by Pierre Henry — is either a very brave or a very shrewd thing to do. It is also rather foolish, for this already outmoded byway of post-war music cannot really sustain an evening, and after a comparatively short while I found myself tending to disregard it in much the same way as one disregards the background noises of a film's soundtrack. The sculptural and abstract settings — what we saw of them — by Rudolf Kufner were considerably more rewarding, and Béjart's theme had much to commend it. His conception of the Orphic legend as symbolising the tempering of an artist through the fires of experience had the courage of its pretensions, and was well-suited for ballet's very special kind of double-talk. Nor does Béjart lack for ideas, both dramatic and even, in a sense, choreographic. A swinging Orphée suspended by his ankles from a rope provides a moment of genuine theatrical excitement, and when in a *pas de deux* Orphée's Shadow (the devastating Michèle Seigneuret) parallels Orphée's movements one sees the kind of original choreographic device a better choreographer might have made much of. Yet always one comes back to the same place — Béjart's choreography seemed inadequate and profoundly inexpressive.

The story was the same with his production of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Prin-*

Continued on page 29

CHARRAT IN TWO ROLES: Left, Janine Charrat with Juan Giuliano in her pas de deux, Concerto de Grieg; *right, with Milenko Banovitch in a scene from her famous work,* Les Algues.



KELLY IN PARIS: Gene Kelly explains his next ballet to the dancers of the Paris Opéra. On the right can be seen George Skibine. Kelly's ballet to Gershwin music is due to be given at the Opéra in the near future. Photo: Lido.

curtain up!

The flowers win

WHO stole the show from the Royal Ballet at the recent State Gala given on April 8 at Covent Garden in honour of the visit of General de Gaulle? A good deal of show-stealing was done by the General himself, whose grey and immense figure acknowledged the, for a gala, tumultuous applause from all parts of the house. He dwarfed the Royal family, who in spite of their glitter stood back in the shadows out of respect for one who during the war earned the admiration and respect of the whole free-thinking world. But in the end it was not the General nor the Royal Family and it certainly wasn't the Royal Ballet who made this memorable evening. It was the thousands of pink carnations which Cecil Beaton, practically assisted by Lady Rose Maclaren, felt to be an essential in decorating any gala occasion to do with France. So impressed was one titled lady, as famous for her beauty as for her memoirs, that when it was all over she was seen leaving the Opera House clutching a large bunch of these flowers. Which seems to me to be more sensible than that bejewelled dowager whom I saw eating radishes from the decorations when vegetables formed the main theme for the Shah of Persia's gala last year.

At one moment it looked as though there would be no decorations or, for that matter, any gala. "Come and view the decorations" invited the administration of Covent Garden to the Press. "Come between 2.30 and 5.30 on the afternoon of the performance." Dutifully we went towards the end of this allotted time only to be met with a scene that looked much as though a bomb had hit the interior of the old Opera House. Chaos reigned everywhere and the performance was only four hours off and it looked as though it would take weeks before the place could get into anything like any sort of shape. Through it all Cecil Beaton looked unperturbed. By the time we arrived at 8.30 there was the mauve and pink Royal Box, the entirely camouflaged and reconstructed Crush Bar and the carnation-covered auditorium looking smugly as though they had been just like that all their lives. Of course we had forgotten about theatres, because it is there miracles can happen in an eye's twinkle.

Unprecedented

NEVER in the whole history of British ballet have so many dancers, theatrical not ballroom, attended a Royal function at Buckingham Palace as were at the ball given there two nights before the wedding of Princess Margaret to Mr. Antony Armstrong-Jones. The reason for this of course being that Mr. Armstrong-Jones has not only photographed most of the members of the Royal Ballet but that they were also amongst his personal friends. Before arriving at the Palace at 9.15 p.m., Dame Margot Fonteyn de Arias gave a pre-ball to all those members of her company who had been invited. Among those who went were Dame Ninette de Valois, Frederick Ashton, Nadia Nerina, Svetlana Beriosova, Anya Linden, Michael Somes and David Blair. Even more dancers and members of the theatrical profession went to the wedding itself, which was certainly the most democratic Royal wedding ever held in this country. It seems that the "Rogues and Vagabonds" status of theatrical people is an attitude now happily confined to the mists of yesterday.

Silence from abroad

IT is an odd habit of British ballet companies that once they leave these shores they might, as far as the British public is concerned, not exist. Hardly a word ever trickles back to the British press apart from grapevine talk culled from personal letters. Take the Royal Ballet Touring Company for instance, they have been on a four-month tour of South Africa and hardly a word has appeared which may possibly have been on account of the ticklish political situation there. However on May 3 they returned to England and I hear, from outside sources, that they gave a very good account of themselves and were a credit to us all both professionally and socially.

Now London's Festival Ballet have no reason to keep silent about their South American tour as there are no unusual political complications apart from those always present in that revolution-torn continent. However, I have learned that the President of Peru saw the company during their visit to his country and at the end of the season conferred the highest Peruvian honour on both Anton Dolin and Dr. Julian Braunsweg. Appropriately enough, this award is known as the Order of the Sun — Dr. Braunsweg in the rank of Commander and Dolin in the rank of officer. Perhaps Dolin could be persuaded to revive his famous *Hymn to the Sun* to mark the occasion.

Don't go into your dance

SOME years ago, Noël Coward warned people off shoving their children into the theatre in a pithy song, "Don't put your daughter on the stage, Mrs. Worthington". Now the Ministry of Labour, with far less attractive wit, has advised dancers to keep off the course unless they feel there is really nothing else they can do. In a

LAST-MINUTE TOUCHES: Cecil Beaton, who designed the decorations for the de Gaulle gala at Covent Garden, is seen supervising the arrangement by Lady Rose Maclaren of some of the thousands of carnations used. See "The Flowers Win" on this page. Photo: P.A.-Reuter.

recently published "New Careers" booklet they warn: "No one should aim at being a professional dancer unless convinced that he or she could not be happy in any other profession." The booklet goes on to say: "This can be said neither too often nor with too much emphasis. There are many men and women of ability who have had training and professional experience but who have been forced to take other jobs in order to earn a living. A dancer's life as a performer is short and boys and girls who plan to make a stage career as dancers are urged to bear this in mind." All of which is sound advice which had it been heeded would have saved people all over the world from belonging to the vast army of dancers "resting". Today the companies are few and chances of success are very remote. But of course knowing you, it is unlikely that *you* will heed this warning and knowing that you won't, the booklet, modestly priced at a bob, gives you much information about the qualities required and the prospects offered.

A theatre saved

WHEN Ballet Rambert appeared at the Wimbledon Theatre at the end of April, they were the first ballet company to play there for at least five years. During that time the theatre has been devoted to a repertory company. Before then Wimbledon used to be a popular date for touring companies, including not only Rambert but also Metropolitan, the Walter Gore Ballet, the Royal Ballet and others.

Ballet Rambert, I hear, were nearly prevented from making their latest visit. Surrey County Council had stipulated the removal of certain fire hazards when last renewing the licence and, although much work had been done, they were not completed by the time a fresh application was necessary. At first it seemed as though the theatre would have to close but generosity prevailed and they were allowed to stay open on condition that the precautions were completed as soon as possible. If, as seems likely, the famous Hippodrome at Golders Green is pulled down, then the revival of the Wimbledon Theatre will play an important part in the future of theatre in suburban London.

Death of three composers

SO far as I can remember, none of the ballets for which the Hungarian composer Erno Von Dohnanyi specifically wrote the music has been performed in this country. Now he is dead, having died in New York on February 11 at the age of 82. He wrote several operas and ballets, but he is more likely to be remembered for some of his very Romantic orchestral and piano music. Paradoxically, the three Dohnanyi ballets seen here in recent years all use music intended to stand on its own.

The earliest was William Dollar's *The Five Gifts,* set to the popular *Variations on a Nursery Theme.* This was created in 1943 and shown in London by the Marquis de Cuevas' company in 1948. Later, Cranko used the *Suite in F Sharp Minor* for *The Shadow* at Covent Garden. More recently Norman Morrice has made use of a string quartet for his *The Two Brothers* for Ballet Rambert.

The score was the most attractive part of the production of Massine's ill-fated *Donald of the Burthens,* and this was composed by Ian Whyte, who died recently at the age of 58. This Scottish conductor and composer, a pupil of Stanford and Vaughan Williams, composed an opera, two operettas and two ballets.

Another well-known figure in the world of ballet was Arthur Benjamin, who recently died at the age of 66. He tried his hand at more serious works but was possibly best known for his light music. His very popular *Jamaican Rumba* was used in a work for the short-lived New Ballet Company a few years back.

Coming events

DEBRA WAYNE'S sudden withdrawal from the part of Odile just a week before the Royal Ballet School's performance must have been a disappointment for her, but I hear that the reason for it was on account of a forthcoming event of a more happy nature. She is married to a young engineer and it appears that they hope for their first child some time this summer.

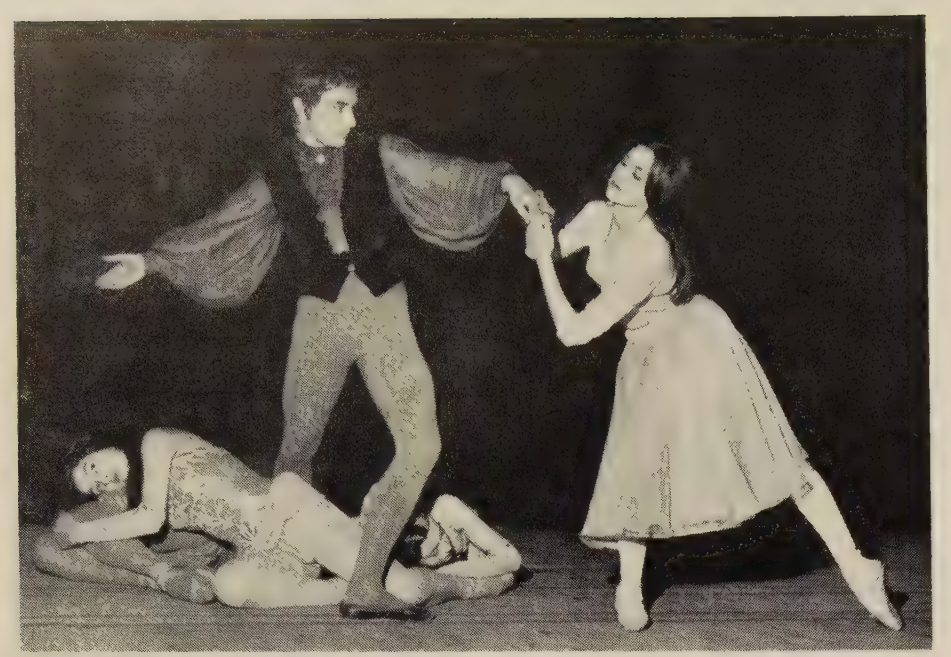
I hear a whisper, too, that Margaret Hill, who left the Royal Ballet at Christmas, is also in what used to be called "an interesting condition". Her husband, of course, is Michael Boulton, who was formerly a principal dancer with the touring Royal Ballet. He has now started on a new career in the business world. The young couple are flat-hunting, being able to settle down in one place for the first time since they began their careers.

Another happy event, this time past, not future, was the marriage of French dancer Noëlle Adam to Sydney Chaplin, son of the famous Charlie. The new Mrs. Chaplin was one of the most delectable features of the Françoise Sagan ballet, *Broken Date* — but we can hardly hold that against her. Before that she danced mainly in revues. Nearer home comes news of another marriage. On March 26, one of Ballet Rambert's principal male dancers, John Chesworth, married a Rambert soloist, Valerie Marsh.

happy birthday to...

		June
Jeanette Minty	London's Festival Ballet	13
Frank Staff	In South Africa	15
Scott Douglas	American Ballet Theatre	16
Desmond Doyle	The Royal Ballet	16
Toni Lander		19
Michael Hogan	London's Festival Ballet	19
Sonia Arova		20
Thelma Litster	Ballet Rambert	22
Elsa Recagno	Ballet Rambert	22
Debra Wayne	The Royal Ballet	22
John Chesworth	Ballet Rambert	22
Doreen Wells	The Royal Ballet	25
Celia Franca	Canadian National Ballet	25
Norman Dixon	Ballet Ventures	26
Christopher Newton	The Royal Ballet	26
Alan Cunliffe	Ballet Rambert	27
Brian Shaw	The Royal Ballet	28
Henning Kronstam	Royal Danish Ballet	29
Gillian Bosworth	London's Festival Ballet	30
Valerie Taylor	The Royal Ballet	30
		July
Leslie Caron		1
Kirsten Simone	Royal Danish Ballet	1
Audrey Deckman	American Ballet Theatre	2
Simon Mottram	The Royal Ballet	3
John Hart	Royal Ballet Organisation	4
Carolyn Fey	Ballet Rambert	6
Katerina Evanova	Canadian National Ballet	10
William Perrie	London's Festival Ballet	11
Brenda Bolton	The Royal Ballet	14
Royes Fernandez	American Ballet Theatre	15
Patricia Wilde	New York City Ballet	16

ZIZI TALKS: Zizi Jeanmaire gives a television interview during the filming of Roland Petit's ballets in which she will reproduce her immortal performance of Carmen.
Photo: John Blomfield.



RAPHAEL AND PAULINE: Peter Van Dijk, as Raphaël, with Jacqueline Rayet, as Pauline, in his ballet based on Balzac's novel, Le Peau de Chagrin.

Le Peau de Chagrin

A ballet in two acts, based on a plot from Balzac's novel, La Peau de Chagrin. **Production and choreography: Peter Van Dijk. Music: Ivan Séménoff Designed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. First performed at the Opéra Comique on April 1, 1960.**

Cast

Raphaël	PETER VAN DIJK
Pauline	JACQUELINE RAYET
Feodora	NINON LEBERTRE
The Antiquarian	MICHEL RAYNE

and *corps de ballet*

AFTER a year's delay *La Peau de Chagrin* finally made its début on April 1. Like Balzac's hero, whose destiny it recounts, it has had to overcome countless obstacles; the last of which was the clash of its première with a performance at the Paris Opéra of an evocation of the first concert to be given in Paris by Chopin, thus causing many critics to absent themselves. But the public, mindless of these setbacks, gave a warm greeting to this work, which figures among the most interesting choreographic creations for our second national theatre.

RAPHAEL AND THE ANTIQUARIAN: Peter Van Dijk with Michel Rayne in the scene where Raphaël buys the wild ass's skin from the Antiquarian and from which the work takes its title. Photos: Lido.

Peter Van Dijk, charmed by the fantastic and sombre atmosphere of Balzac's novel, has adapted it beautifully to the demands of the stage, and he has condensed the action without modifying or losing its spirit. However, with his natural leaning towards reserve and sobriety, he has divested the work of its 1830-ish romantic attitude by accentuating its philosophical character. He thus shows himself to be a product of his age, less anxious to depict the entire destiny of his Balzacian hero than to reflect on the human values of the theme — the violence of his hero's desires and their undoubted vanity.

The curtain rises on a misty landscape which at once establishes the strange atmosphere peculiar to the work — one of thought and dream rather than action. From the quay peopled by shadowy characters — tramps, a girl, a mother with her children, a lover — Raphaël makes his entrance. He is a stranger to the pure love which Pauline is to bring to him, and, motivated by his wretchedness, he tries to kill himself. Suddenly he discovers the wild ass's skin in the window of an antique shop. The dealer offers it to him without concealing its dangers, for, in mysterious signs, the skin bears the inscription: "He who possesses me, possesses all, but his life will belong to me. That is God's wish. Desire, and your desires will be granted, but your desires will determine your life. It is here. At each wish I will diminish, as will your days. If you want me, take me. God be with you. So be it."

The prediction materialises quickly. The young man is taken to a sumptuous fête by his friends and there he finds fortune and also passion when he meets the dazzling Feodora. But thanks to the skin, which shrinks quickly, the encounter itself becomes a formality. Raphaël is in anguish when he realises his power, and withdraws, determined to avoid any new temptation. His friends try in vain to draw him out and to help him: doctors examine him. Pauline alone brings him tenderness and serenity when he is on the threshold of death.

The story is lucidly told in a classical and simple dance language. The production is always expressive; the choreography appears harmonious, though sometimes a shade too restrained on first viewing. The work appears to best advantage through the choreographer's personal interpretation of Raphaël. With him is Jacqueline Rayet, pure and graceful as the gentle Pauline, while Ninon Lebertre is the glittering Feodora. These two rôles, however, could perhaps have been given more subtle treatment, and many would prefer the *pas de trois* for the Doctors, which is an excellent piece of action, to the Orgy Scene.

Ivan Séménoff's score follows the action faithfully and pays due respect to the dance: it suggests quite perfectly the climate created by the choreographer and by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's excellent décors. The costumes are of lesser merit and remind one more of the world of Marceau than that of the romantic lithographs. Feodora's tutu, especially, is dangerously reminiscent of that of the Firebird.

But whatever reservations of detail one may have on this work, whose next performance will be in Hamburg, Peter Van Dijk has certainly made a striking début into the domain of dance drama.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

DORATI'S *FIREBIRD*

Stravinsky: *The Firebird.* London Symphony Orchestra (Antal Dorati). Mercury MMA 11089; Stereo AMS 16038. 12 in. 38*s.* 1½*d.*

ANSERMET'S complete Decca recording of *The Firebird,* first issued in mono in 1956 and more recently in stereo, is well and truly superseded by this breathtakingly vivid account of the score under Dorati.

Reviewing the Decca when it first came out, I praised Ansermet's delicate handling of the score's impressionistic aspects — if Gabriel Pierné's conducting of the 1909 première laid similar stress on the youthful Stravinsky's debt to Debussy it was small wonder that the French composer rushed backstage afterwards and embraced Stravinsky. But Ansermet seriously underplayed the music's dramatic qualities, a lack of rhythmic drive and attack producing a limp, pretty-pretty effect in many sections.

My disappointment with Ansermet's performance was intensified by the memory of Dorati's vital conducting of the ballet when he was musical director of the De Basil company. In many performances I saw in Australia of a production directed and rehearsed by Fokine himself — with Baronova, Toumanova, Kirsova or Nemtchinova in the title rôle — Dorati's masterly account of the score always heightened in an unforgettable way the ballet's subtle but potent atmosphere of mystery and suspense.

This new Mercury recording fulfils my highest expectation and should prove a revelation to those who have only ever heard the complete ballet on the Ansermet disc or as played for the Royal Ballet. Many of Dorati's speeds may be thought too brisk, but they accord with the composer's metronome markings; and it should be remembered that Fokine originally took his speeds from Stravinsky, who acted as piano accompanist for the early rehearsals. Apart from later stating that he felt the production was "too elaborate", Stravinsky had no quarrel with Fokine's use of his music.

FRONT CURTAIN by Marc Chagall for The Firebird, *used in Balanchine's production for New York City Ballet. Antal Dorati's new recording of Stravinsky's complete score is reviewed on this page.*

NEW RECORDS

Dorati's performance of the *Danse Infernale* is unquestionably the most exciting ever recorded and puts back into it the feverish, nightmare intensity that is altogether lacking in Ansermet's recording and in the general run of Royal Ballet performances. Listen, too, to the way Dorati establishes right from the first bars a powerful atmosphere of enchantment and foreboding (which would immediately silence the usual chattering at this point in the theatre), to the kaleidoscopic brilliance of the playing of the Firebird's dance, and to the almost visually explicit account of Ivan's breaking of the egg — no tame cleavage into two symmetrical halves (as at Covent Garden) in this epic telling of the tale! And how magnificently Dorati builds up the final *crescendo* into an overwhelming paean of "happiness ever after".

For once, the mono version is preferable to the stereo on account of its wider dynamic range and greater brilliance at the upper end of the scale. The stereo has the usual advantages of instrumental pinpointings and spread, but the general tone is considerably less vivid than on the mono. The *Danse Infernale,* in particular, is deprived on the stereo version of a good deal of the impact it makes on the mono by the all-too-obvious monitoring of the dynamic levels, and I hope that Mercury will seriously consider making a new stereo transfer.

As it is, the mono recording can be unreservedly recommended as the most thrilling account of *The Firebird* one is ever likely to hear. If only Dorati, who is no longer attached to the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, could be persuaded to conduct some ballet performances at Covent Garden! **David Hunt**

Talking—on ballet

BERYL GREY: Jupiter jep OOC7. MARIE RAMBERT (with Tamara Karsavina): Jupiter jep OOC8. ADELINE GENEE: Jupiter jep OOC9. TAMARA KARSAVINA: OC12, at approx. 14s. each.

VOICES talking about themselves and their art can be the most revealing record of a dancer's art apart from films. In many ways these discs bring each personality more alive than can any film.

Jupiter have struck a nice balance in their choice of speaker, for Genée, in her cultivated and rather dry Anglo-Danish voice, tells of her own particular Edwardian era, the conditions at the Empire Theatre and of her early childhood. Beryl Grey, after speaking of the early days with the Sadler's Wells Ballet, goes on to her approach towards her art. Both in their various ways are valuable, but if I have a special preference it is for the disc of Karsavina on her youthful years in St. Petersburg and the nun-like eight-year training that Imperial Theatre students had to undergo, followed, on the second side, by descriptions of the first years of the Diaghilev Ballet, its first Paris and London seasons. On another record she discusses Diaghilev, the creation of *Le Sacre du Printemps* and early Ballet Club days with Marie Rambert, who, on the second side of this disc, considers the turning points in her own remarkable career.

There you have it — four great personalities of ballet talking well and intelligently. You must have these records.

P. W.

What We Thought of the T.R.M.

Continued from page 25

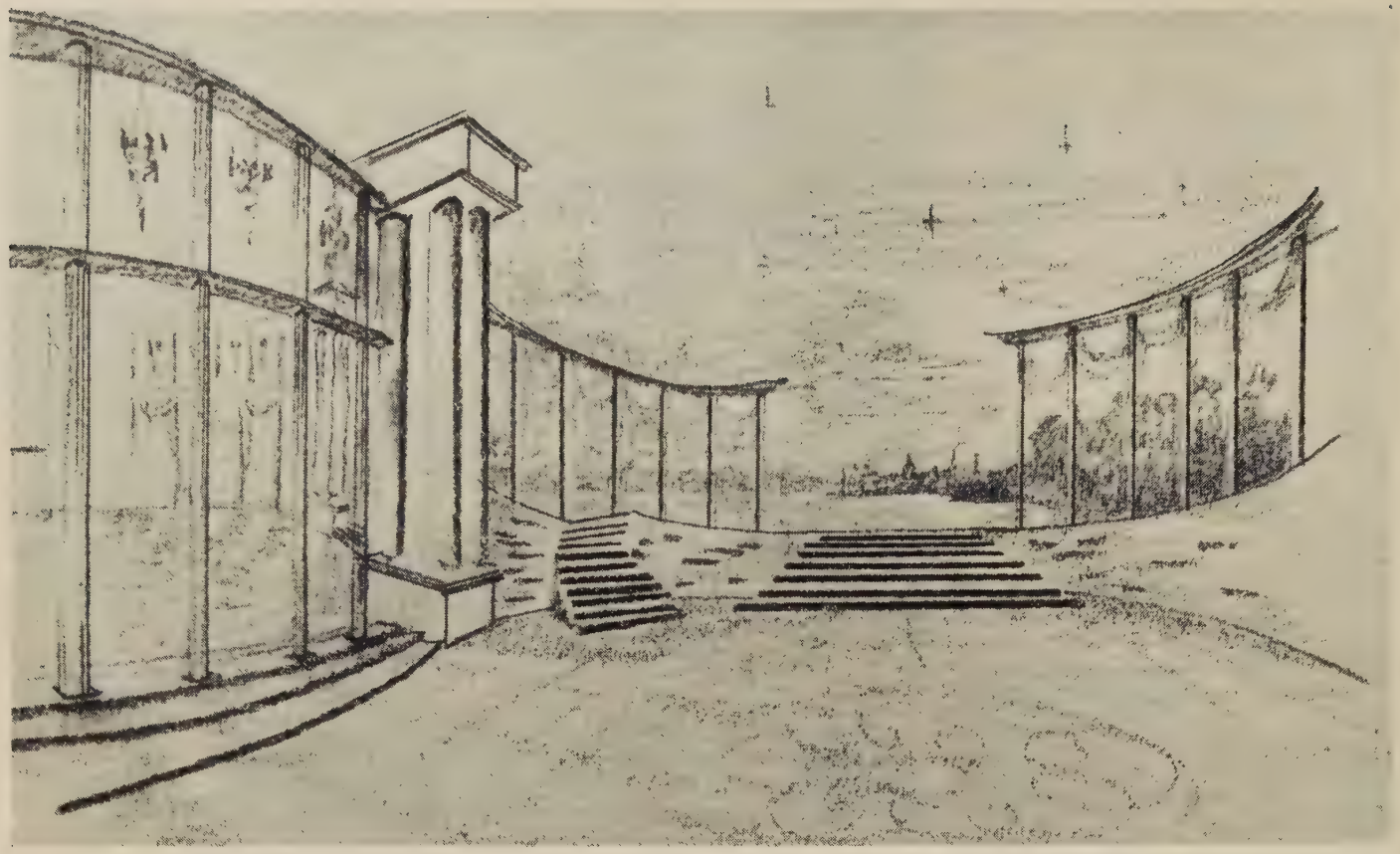
temps, which I saw the next night. Throwing aside Stravinsky's scenario of the Chosen Virgin and her dance of death, Béjart has produced the ballet as a fertility rite. With a brilliantly monotonous selection of grotesque movements and erotic gestures pounding away in time to the score, Béjart has produced a dramatic spectacle that is effective within its own terms. It is, despite telling performances by Tania Bari and Germinal Casado as the happy couplers, infinitely less effective on subsequent viewings. This is partly due perhaps to the superficial sexuality of the theme — it makes a wish-fulfilment riot for the sexually under-nourished — but much more to the emptiness of its choreography.

Béjart's choreographic method, with its stressed and sagged grotesqueries alternating with passages of conventional classical choreography often slightly quirked, lacks both design and compulsion, but must not blind us to his merits. To immense panache as a theatrical producer, he adds a very sincere desire to extend the frontiers of ballet. His serious quest for immediacy, heightened drama and contact with contemporary life and art, may well be signposting the way that others might follow.

Western Theatre Ballet's contribution to the season — Peter Darrell's sterling *The Prisoners* and Béjart's unexpected *Sonate à Trois* — must here be dismissed as read. Nor is it necessary to say a great deal about the work of Janine Charrat during the week. *Les Algues* remains, warts and all, a strange kind of ballet masterpiece. Stuffed with gimmicks, weighed down by Guy Bernard's indifferently wishy-washy music, and over-long but under-shaped, this ballet of a madhouse devised by Castelli tells its story of the mad Catherine and her devoted Guerain with a wild passion that lives longer in the memory than its faults and excesses. Although the production was not nearly so good, nor so well danced, as that seen in London six years ago, Charrat's portrayal of Catherine is still a most touching creation. Milenko Banovich's Guerain was also exceptionally good, even though it could not efface memories of Van Dijk in the same rôle.

Charrat's one new work, *Fantaisie Concertante,* turned out to be a painfully undistinguished little piece of plotless neoclassicism to Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto, notable only for the athletic efforts of its cast. Her familiar, Lifaresque, *Grieg Concerto,* danced by the powerful Juan Giuliano and Charrat herself, was not much significant.

So there it is — a rather niggardly and ungrateful notice of a week London has every reason to be grateful for. Perhaps I have under-estimated Béjart's ballets — certainly they gave me two sleepless nights thinking about them, and I am eager to see more of his work — but I do not under-estimate the need for choreographic experiment which prompted them.



BALLROOM DESIGN (above): Darrell Lass's sketch for the exterior of the ballroom for Granada's TV Cinderella *production.*

SLIPPER TRYING: The Prince (Michael Somes) tries the slipper on Cinderella (Fonteyn) watched by the Jester (Alexander Grant). A moment towards the end of Granada's production of the Prokofiev/Ashton ballet.

Cinderella

Danced by the Royal Ballet on Granada Television on April 13. Directed by Mark Stuart.

Cinderella ..... MARGOT FONTEYN
The Prince ..... MICHAEL SOMES
The Fairy Godmother...ANNETTE PAGE
The Ugly Sisters ..... ROSEMARY LINDSAY, GERD LARSEN
The Jester ..... ALEXANDER GRANT

AFTER glancing through the press release put out by Granada Television for Ashton's *Cinderella*, one could only face the programme with alarm. The accent was not on artistic considerations, but on quantity and expense. Cinderella's cloak with 15 ft. train, 250 people involved in the production, 10 ft. coach lined with nylon fur, and a ballroom twice the area of the stage at the Royal Opera House. A list of all its "attractions" would read like an antique dealer's catalogue.

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

But in their de luxe illustrated booklet also on the production the balance is restored to quality. The points we have emphasised in these pages for years are all reiterated: "To compensate for the loss of colour, of spectacle, of personal contact, we (the producers) must bring to it some of the unique advantages the cameras can give us; the ability to move in and reveal detail at close range; the capacity for observing quickly different aspects of the same scene and of giving dramatic emphasis to the story by the juxtaposition of artist and camera," etc., etc.

Now how far did the actual production fulfil the aims? Certainly it came nearer the bonbon magnificence suggested above

than in achieving any significant artistic or creative relationship between dancers and cameras. The production was a disappointment and its shortcomings were magnified because in the very same week (April 17) the BBC re-transmitted their recent production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. This, too, has its flaws, but probably as a result of the comparison inevitably made with the ITV programme, I found I liked it better on second viewing. Anyway, my respect for Margaret Dale's sound, craftsmanlike version of *The Sleeping Beauty* has grown sufficiently to even make me look forward to seeing it a third time.

The Granada feature, however, scored a very marked success on two closely related counts — the use of close-ups and the performance of Fonteyn, who gave the production an enormous boost. Very sensibly, the generous amount of close-ups Fonteyn received were given to her only when in relaxed pose, while acting or miming, never during the actual dancing. She was thus able to make her first real contribution to television ballet.

Although the work is the first in which the Royal Ballet exclusively has appeared in a full-evening ballet in Britain (they have done so in America), it was not history-making in any artistic sense. The ballet itself does not hold well together; the dramatic line, simple though it be, gets lost among the *divertissements*. The producers obviously felt conscious of this for they supplied down-to-the-children commentary, with such lines as: *Narrator* — "Obedient to her Godmother's warning, Cinderella ran home as fast as her unwilling legs would carry her . . . for what girl would want to run to a dark kitchen from a Royal Ball, where a Prince had looked on her, beneath the candlelight, with love?"

Moreover, if the Ugly Sisters fail to get laughs, they move out of the rhythm and purpose of the whole to produce extraneous dull spots.. The production, mark you, started off most imaginatively. It attempted to use Grant as the Jester to link, if not weld, the work together, and he introduced it by parting the curtains *Pagliacci* fashion.

Imaginative touches showed the Sisters peering at their presumed reflections in a backless mirror; the kitchen scenes were extremely effective, while double-images and mixes strove to capture the magic and fantasy of the plot — the transformation of the pumpkin into the carriage, Cinderella's sumptuous gown for the kitchen rags and back again at midnight, the metamorphosis of the Fairy Godmother from someone who looked like Robespierre to someone who looked like Annette Page. There was, come to that, a clever rearrangement of the action, pantomime fashion, to make each season present Cinderella with an item of her costume. The Autumn Fairy (Shirley Grahame) changed two leaves into a pair of slippers: the Spring Fairy (Merle Park) lifted Cinderella's headdress from a pool.

The programme started a great deal better than it finished and, consequently, left the impression that too much of the time schedule had been allotted to the opening sequences. As always, the large *ensembles* failed to translate easily into television, and what the viewer saw was too often a sea of pastel tutus merging into each other. There were very few decapitations: on the other hand, the cameras were frequently over-reticent and did not cut from scene to scene in strict accordance with the musical phrasing. Fonteyn, by reason of her brilliantly accented dancing, especially in the final *pas de deux* in which Somes partnered her in impeccable taste, was head and shoulders above the rest of the cast. While Fonteyn made Cinderella as physically believable as possible, most of the dancers gave impersonations of their stage performances. Only Somes, despite his limited material, Alexander Grant, Annette Page and Christine Beckley as the Winter Fairy seemed completely at ease before the cameras.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET
at Covent Garden

Franco-British Gala

EVEN in an attempt to produce an all-French night in honour of General de Gaulle on April 8, it would be very hard to imagine a less representative "French" evening than that which was placed before the French President, the English Royal Family and about as glittering an audience as could be found anywhere in the world today.

By the end of the evening the focus still remained on the front-of-house as, possibly, for this occasion was just what was intended. Act I of *Coppélia*, scene I of *Mam'zelle Angot*, a *Homage to Petipa* (including a "homage" to Ivanov in the "Black Swan" *pas de deux)* and *La Valse*, is hardly everyone's idea of an evening's entertainment, but in every other respect it was an enchanting evening. Having crossed the Channel one would imagine that the good General would rather have seen something British, and it was rather as if the Queen went to Paris and was shown the Paris Opéra doing *The Rake's Progress*.

Anya Linden was certainly not at her best in Swanilda from the first excerpt, though her six friends were pretty good. Blair, as Franz, has little to do in this act except to behave like a teen-ager and exit climbing up a ladder. The General was never to know where *he* went except that there he was back again in a different rôle, as the Caricaturist in the next excerpt — from *Angot*. Alexander Grant, as always, steals the show in this scene by his brilliant impersonation of the Barber, while Merle Park was quite enchanting as the Mam'zelle herself. So good is she in these soubrette rôles that I would like to start a petition to stop her attempting those Giselles, Odettes and Auroras.

The "Homage" had Beriosova and MacLeary very dashing in the Black Swan *pas de deux* (no variations or coda, why?), Annette Page in the "Bluebird" variation (if you dropped your programme you missed this one) and Fonteyn and Somes very glittering in the "Aurora" *pas de deux*. The best thing about all this was the quite excellent lighting of William Bundy, which made the dancers seem suspended in black space. Finally we had some soloists and *corps* in the Ashton/Ravel *La Valse* with everyone dancing for all their worth and the whole thing looking very pretty and very "French". If we could have had this together with all the ballerinas in *Birthday Offering* then we might have had something to be proud of and more attention would have been focused from the auditorium to the stage.

P. W.

A Frisky Fille

THE test of a ballet — the genuine litmus paper test of a great ballet — is not how it looks when danced by its first cast, but how it looks when danced ten, twenty years later by its fourth or fourteenth. I believe that Ashton's *La Fille Mal Gardée* is almost certain to become a permanent glory of British ballet, the sort of classic handed down and down with the same sort of affectionate. carefree reverence that the Danes bestow on their deservedly much-loved *Napoli*. Meanwhile the ballet has passed the first step on its road to becoming a tradition, when on April 30 its original virtuoso quartet of Nerina, Blair, Grant and Holden was split for the first time, and Nerina's created rôle of Lise was undertaken by Merle Park.

Park had already been seen in the first act of the ballet at the last Benevolent Fund Gala, but this was the first time she had danced the complete rôle, and naturally the occasion aroused a great deal of interest, not least because Lise is a part that has been so carefully tailored to Nerina's emotional and technical measurements. Consequently the performance was not only to provide an unusually testing test for a rising young dancer, but also, in a sense, a test for a rising young ballet. Both dancer and ballet emerged from the ordeal creditably.

As a technician Park is in a different class to Nerina, her technique being both less brilliant and less pure. Her figure is not perfect — she could with advantage lose a little weight — nor is her turn-out always impeccable. On the other hand she has enormous technical facility, so that her execution consistently looks better than it is, and she is also among the most musical and intelligent dancers in the company. Finally she has a naturally unforced air of exuberance and a completely engaging warmth and personality.

Her first act was delightful. Like Fonteyn, but unlike Nerina, she lacks elevation, and it was particularly notable the way she substituted a zestful *brio* for Nerina's mighty jumps in the great bravura *pas de deux* in the second scene. Earlier her sunny good nature had enabled her to give the part a jollity that was quite different, yet not any less appropriate, than Nerina's charm. She got through the dancing with magnificent aplomb, although one unfortunate contretemps between herself and Blair occurred in the first scene, when she muffed a lift, apparently by taking too deep a *plié* before she jumped, while he made matters worse by trying to lift her — impossibly — straight from his shoulder. I mention this only because it caused a certain amount of comment, and it was really the kind of slip that can happen to any two dancers, and is not likely to be repeated.

Where I think Park could improve is in the second act, particularly in her miming, which was unexpectedly heavy-handed and unsubtle. This, in fact, was the only disappointing factor in a performance full of promise that while naturally not at Nerina's level, still deserves to put an end to all the confident assertions that "although, of course, *La Fille Mal Gardée* is a very good

HARLEQUIN BALLET : Three scenes from the programme given by Harlequin Ballet (dirccted by John Gregory) at Queen Mary College on April 30. Above, Bel Canto Danzato *with Barbara Vernon held aloft in the work she choreographed to Pergolesi music.*

HARLEQUIN AND COLUMBINE *(above): James Bennett, as Pierrot, in Tamara Karsavina's version of the Drigo/Petipa* Les Millions d'Arlequin.

SVATOVAC *(below): The company in Croatian "Kola" choreographed by Barbara Vernon.* *Photos : John Blomfield.*

ballet, it would be nothing without Nerina". Well, here it was without Nerina, and it remained a totally entrancing evening in the theatre.

All the other principals have over the course of time improved on their original performances. Blair's Colas is a wonderful piece of dancing (and, for that matter, acting) which will probably serve to set a new standard for British male dancing, in much the same way as did Harold Turner's performance in *Les Patineurs* in 1937. Holden and Grant have gone from strength to strength as the Mother and Alain, and both are now even more superb than they were at the ballet's first performance. It is notable, incidentally, how much Holden has added to the dancing aspect of his rôle, and his clog dance, good from the first, is now brilliant. Leslie Edwards has also enriched his portrayal of Alain's Father, and now he stalks through the ballet with mountainous assurance. A word also for Franklin White and Maurice Metlis — whom I unfairly omitted to mention in my original notice. As the Lawyer and his Clerk, they both give agreeably exaggerated, yet tastefully uncaricatured performances. Finally, another mention for young Lawrence Ruffell, who seems to have decided that the Cock is one of the principal characters of the ballet and has backed up that decision with some extremely effective dancing.

Another important cast change, which had the misfortune to be lost in the hurry and scurry of the first night of *Le Baiser de la Fée* on April 12, was the first appearance of Anya Linden as the Châtelaine in *La Fête Etrange.* This was a remarkably beautiful and telling performance, full of mysterious radiance. From the very beginning of the ballet Linden has the strange, heightened awareness of a Brontë heroine, and the atmosphere thus set she maintains to the end. Always an intelligent and resourceful actress, Linden has here found a rôle that fits her personality and striking beauty. This, like her recent performances in *Giselle* and *The Firebird,* confirms that her talents as a dancer are now maturing in a most interesting fashion.

On May 7 Covent Garden had a day of hail and, possibly, farewell. In the afternoon it was a particular pleasure to welcome back Brian Shaw from the Royal Ballet's South African tour. Dancing in *Les Rendezvous,* better than ever before, his crisp and natural brilliance showed just how much the ballet had lost without him. In the evening a somewhat subdued Fonteyn gave what the grapevine says *may* be her last performances in *Les Sylphides* and *The Firebird.*

C. B.

INESITA

OF course we have welcomed Spanish dancers not born in Spain before. There have been Luisillo, José Greco, Roberto Ximenez and Manolo Vargas and quite a long list of them. The tendency is, however, to eye with suspicion Spanish dancers born outside the Iberian peninsula. They have to prove themselves before they are finally accepted and regardless of the fact that they are often splendid dancers, the test is a very severe one, far more severe than that often imposed on frequently indifferent dancers born in Andalusia. Inesita, who gave two lecture recitals at Morley College on April 20, comes from New Mexico, which is something very different to Old Mexico — the "New" being in America, and we all know what we

think of most Spanish dancers hailing from there. However, Inesita was a pupil of the great "Estampio", and therein lies the secret. Remember that very British Alicia Marks became very Russian Alicia Markova owing to her teacher Seraphine Astafieva; now very American-sounding Inesita becomes very Spanish owing to *her* teacher.

In her lecture demonstration she talked about Flamenco (giving some fine examples of *Alegrías* and *Soleares),* touched on regional dances (with an example of the *Jota),* talked about castanets and their differences of sex, demonstrated the difference in male and female flamenco (dancing a Farrucca to explain the male side), ending up in a brilliant display of *Zapateado* demonstrating the infinite variety and nuance of footwork and heel-beat.

To be able to demonstrate all this and to talk at length between the dancing, without appearing to be breathless, was a feat in itself, and any falling off in performance would have been excusable, but Inesita showed what a very fine stylist she is — her arms are good, her castanets eloquent and her *Zapateado* some of the best I have seen from male or female. Only in her *Farrucca* was there any falling off and I thought it rather a mistake to give such a lengthy example of an essentially masculine dance needing all the strength and speed in turns of the body and intense virility that only the male body is capable of.

In spite of the British aversion to recitals of the dance, it is to be hoped that a wider public will be given the chance of seeing the very considerable art of Inesita. **P. W.**

FOREIGN NEWS: Owing to lack of space the remainder of the news from abroad has had to be held over until next month.

LE BAISER DE LA FEE
DECOR

Continued from page 21

the designing, for his drop-curtain gives the impression of vast falling leaves. They become luminous and then melt into the turbulent upheaval of the opening scene when the mother struggles with her baby through a storm. Although she appears to have reached the roof of the world the actual impression is of storm-past rather than storm-present. The brown and grey rock masses give a feeling of intense cold rather than of the more lively elements. Possibly the reason for there being no feeling of storm was caused by the incredibly unimaginative lighting which just flooded the stage without giving one ounce of atmosphere. It could be argued of course that any lighting more atmospheric and with greater use of cross-lighting would have obscured the set, but in this case it was hardly necessary to see the set in the opening part of this scene. Just a faint suggestion of place, seen through the dancers leaping in the spotlights, would have been quite enough. Then after the mother dies and the villagers enter a more general lighting could have shown up the scene.

With the move towards more recognisable localities, in the village of scene 2, the lighting improved and a warmth suffused the stage giving it a wintery glow. Little white cottages tumbled down a mountain side and this abstract treatment is far more suggestive than those backcloths with detailed roofs and windows — it is a village seen through half-closed eyes. The neutral gauzy wings give it all the air of something partly remembered in a dream. Did it ever happen? Who was real — the fairies or the villagers? This is the way supernatural fantasies should be given and designed.

The Fairy leads the Young Man away and white-veined tendrils descend and make an admirable front cloth, which later grows

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and symbolises the confusion which must exist in the mind of any man torn between a beautiful Fairy and a delectable Fiancée. Soon, little lights, like stars, are seen in the distance and as they grow brighter turn out to be candles outlining the mill where the Fiancée lives and where she awaits her prospective bridegroom. The original village scene is now in the distance behind the black silhouette of "mill" shapes and a Gothic doorway. Later, as the fairy completely subjugates the Young Man, the scene darkens and back-lighting causes the village to glow like a stained-glass window — and a very beautiful effect too.

Finally, the Fairy leads her captive to a Land Beyond Time and Place, first seen through mists. It later opens out into a strange and tortured landscape in purple, brown and grey with ominous rocks seemingly suspended in mid-air. At the approach of a mortal, in the form of the Fiancée searching eternally for her lost love, earth comes billowing out of the rock and makes the happy couple invisible to human eyes. Finally they and their kingdom are folded from our human eyes by huge gauzes which form into the red and brown wings of a giant moth.

In my opinion, Kenneth Rowell has created some of the most distinguished settings for any ballet in the current Covent Garden repertory. They are intellectually conceived and monumentally beautiful. They are so dominant that he has set himself an equally monumental task in fitting costumes into this surrounding splendour, and this task he has not completed with entire satisfaction.

He has attempted to wed abstraction to realism and this wedding has nearly met the same fate as that for the Young Man to the Fiancée — almost consummated but not quite. His Winds and fairy creatures are too conventional — rather what we expect these people to be and rather too chic in the manner of the post-war Ecole de Paris. Too overloaded with sequins and hanging bits and pieces. Apart from two male Winds — one in red and one in blue which stick out like sore thumbs — the designs are delightful in themselves but are too fussy for such an overloaded background. On the other hand, the Fairy's costume is just right, simple in line but with interior lines of blue, silver and white which shimmer and give her magic. There are only two faults in this otherwise admirable creation and they are in the too square head-dress and a far too natural make-up. A pink face is quite wrong and she should have either used wet-white or greased her cheek-bones like I seem to remember Joyce Grahame did when she played Myrthe in the Rambert *Giselle*. The flesh should have been worked-in so that it was impossible to see where the costume and head-dress finished and started.

Again, the simple grey costume for the Young Man was ruined by attaching a sort of cape effect to the shoulders which flowed out at the back, spoiled the line and made a costume that should have been essentially masculine appear chi-chi. The Fiancée's two costumes are simple and charming and just right, though a pink cape with white veined embroidery was rather too elaborate for a village girl.

I particularly liked the rich reds and browns of the village boys with antelope horns on their heads and also the costumes for the comic village band, in orange. They achieved an air of "fête day" without being cluttered. The peasant girls were mainly good in shape though their colours were rather too insipid to make much impression against the strength of the setting. Presumably their greens, yellows and blues were intended to suggest youth and innocence, but in actual fact they became so invisible in the general melée that they suggested nothing in particular. But one costume I found very disturbing — that for the Gypsy. It was very elegant with its full skirt and black busby — then she put on a voluminous plastic cape. Mercifully at later performances this was toned down considerably and its unadulterated shiny surface broken-up. Doubtless the idea was to make this person seem strange and unreal, but this use of plastic lost its strangeness as far back as the 'twenties when it was used for *La Chatte* by Gabo and Pevsner (in those days it was called "talc"), and since then, though a lot of designers have used it, the stage effect of this substance looks common and *demodé*. Either it has to be painted or else covered with some thin transparent material so as to deaden its hideous glitter. It came as a shock to me that somebody with such intelligence and integrity as Kenneth Rowell so obviously has should have even considered this material for one second

Possibly I may appear to be rather hard on the few blemishes in this otherwise splendid production, but it is because I consider both Rowell and Nicholas Georgiadis (whose reversion to tutus in *Dances Concertantes* I shall never forgive) to be the finest designers working for ballet in England that their few molehills of mistakes become rather mountainous. The molehills of most other designers remain molehills in the surrounding flatness.

Peter Williams

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, by Dominic, is of Svetlana Beriosova and Donald MacLeary in Kenneth MacMillan's new version of Stravinsky's Le Baiser de la Fée **for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden.**

BERIOSOVA was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1932. She was taught by her father, Nicholas Beriosoff, who was a dancer with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Another teacher was Vilzak. In 1941 she made her début with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as Clara in *Casse Noisette*. In 1947 she danced in *Les Sylphides* and *Casse Noisette* with the Ottawa Ballet Company. After a short stay with the de Cuevas company she came to England and joined Metropolitan Ballet as a ballerina. She became immediately popular with British audiences during that company's several tours. When the company disbanded in 1949, she joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet as joint ballerina with Elaine Fifield.

MacLEARY was born in Glasgow in 1937. In 1951 he became a pupil of Sheila Ross and in the following year joined the Royal Ballet School and was soon appearing in ballets with the opera at Covent Garden. In 1945 he joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre and was soon taking over important rôles. The following year he created parts in MacMillan's *Danses Concertantes* and in Rodrigues' *Saudades*. Later he rose to become one of the company's principal male dancers and in 1959 joined the resident company at Covent Garden as one of its six principal males and as partner to Beriosova.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET

at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

May
18 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Grey, Ashbridge)
21 **(M)** *Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, Blair)
26 *Antigone, Les Sylphides, Le Baiser de la Fée*
28 **(M)** *Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair)
28 **(E)** *Scènes de Ballet, Giselle* (Grey, Ashbridge)

June
3 *Les Rendezvous, Giselle* (Nerina, Blair).
4 **(M)** *Le Lac Cygnes* (Page, Hynd).
4 **(E)** *Scènes de Ballet, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes).
6 *Les Rendezvous, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
10 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
11 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Page Hynd).
11 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
15 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Doyle).
16 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Sibley, Burne).
18 **(M)** *Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
21 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair).
22 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
25 **(M)** *Le Lac Cygnes* (Sibley, Doyle).
25 **(E)** *Scènes de Ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
End of season

BALLET RAMBERT

May
16 The Civic Theatre, Chesterfield
23 The Theatre Royal, Norwich
June
13 The Essoldo Theatre, Brighton.
July
18 The Sadler's Wells Theatre, London (2 weeks)
August
1 The Devon Festival, Barnstaple

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

June
20 The Opera House, Nice.
July
4 The Palace Theatre, Manchester (2 weeks).
18 The Royal Festival Hall, London (2 months).

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June
20-22 Grass Theatre, Waterlow Park, Highgate.
23-25 Streatham Common Open Air Theatre.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

PARIS : Théâtre des Nations at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt.
Folk Dance Companies include : South Korea (May 25-27), Turkey (June 22-25).
NERVI (Genoa) : Company directed by Leonide Massine, July 8 to 28.
July 8-10 : *Decameron*
13-14 : *Il Barbiere de Siviglia*
16-17 : *Les Sylphides, Bal des Voleurs, Scheherazade*
22-14 : *Cimarosiana, Choreatium, Le Beau Danube*
DUBROVNIK : July 10-August 24. The Serbian Folk Dance Company from Belgrade. The Croatian Folk Dance *Ensemble* from Zagreb. The Macedonian Folk Dancers from Skopje.
BAALBECK (Lebanon) : July 16, 17, Beryl Grey and partner with Son et Lumiere ; August 7-14, Lebanese Folklore Group
SANTANDER : July 30-August 2, International Folklore Display. August 9-13, American Ballet Theatre. August 21-24, Antonio and his Spanish Ballet.
EDINBURGH : at the Empire Theatre THE ROYAL BALLET
August
22-24 *Danses Concertantes, Le Basier de la Fée, Petrushka.*
25-27 *Ballabile, La Peri,* or *Raymonda, Prince of the Pagodas* (Act 3)
29-31 SUSANA AND JOSE.
September
2-3 THE LITTLE BALLET TROUPE OF INDIA
BALLET EUROPEEN Massine's Nervi Company
5-7 *Schéhérazade, Choreartium, Le Beau Danube*
8-10 *Commedia Umana* (Decameron)

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June 14 : LINDEN, DOYLE **June 11 at 2.15 : PAGE, HYND**
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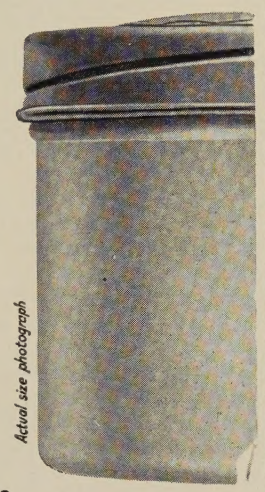

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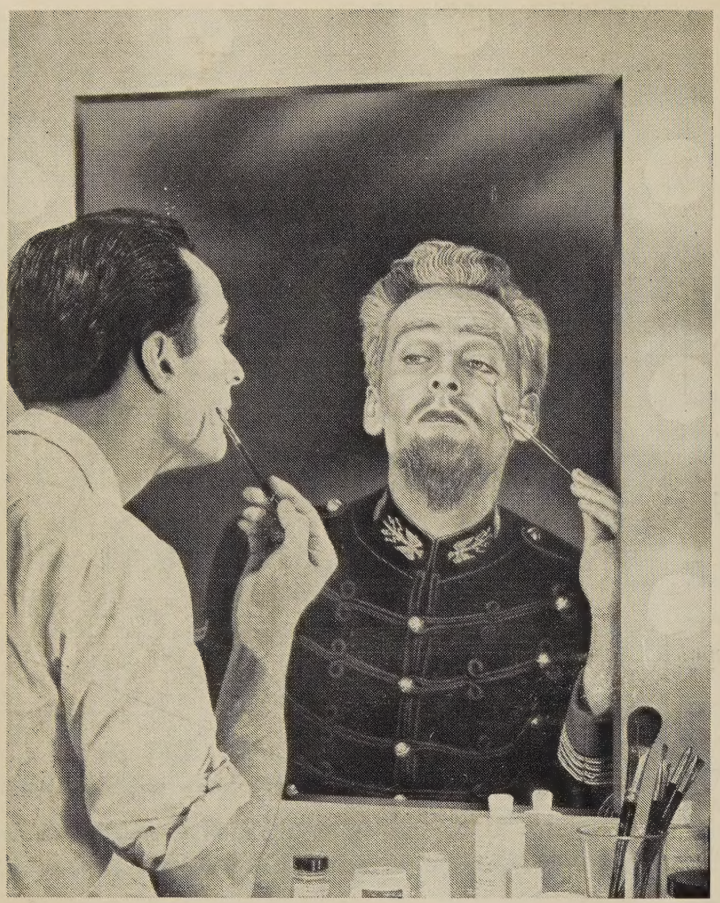

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